Think TV: A Guide to Managing TV in the Home

FACILITATOR'S MANUAL AND THINK TV WORKSHOPS

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INTRODUCTION

Overview

This manual accompanies a workshop program called ThinkTV and is based on the idea that television can be used to develop important literacy and life skills, including critical thinking. ThinkTV combines strategies from two related fields: critical thinking education and media literacy education. Critical thinking and media literacy are important skills for people to develop and use.

In a series of three short workshops, participants will be given strategies and tools to help them become critical thinkers and viewers. They will explore the phases of critical thinking and practise using them in everyday situations, particularly related to television viewing. The three workshops will help participants to manage television at home.

There are two additional, optional workshops, which focus on the language of television. One deals with the production techniques used in the making of TV programs, and the other on the marketing strategies behind commercials. While these workshops are not necessary to create understanding of television in everyday situations, they will be of interest to participants who would like to explore this medium in more depth.

ThinkTV workshops are directed at parents, but most activities can be adapted for other participants. Workshops will explore the influence that television has on how people think, learn, and behave. Parents will learn how to get involved with their children's viewing – what they are watching and how much they are watching. They will also learn to help children balance television viewing with other activities. They will learn how their children make sense of what they see and how to help them relate TV to their own life experiences.

For parents and other participants, the outcomes of ThinkTV will be a better understanding of television and increased media literacy, or critical viewing skills. The process used to reach these outcomes will be critical thinking.

This manual will assist facilitators who have some experience working with adults in formal or informal settings, but who may have little or no background in teaching media literacy or critical thinking.

Each workshop has an annotated resource list, including resources that are part of the activities. ThinkTV also refers to a variety of books, articles, videos, reports, Internet sites, and other resource materials that can be used for further exploration of the issues.

Background to the Program

ThinkTV was developed in response to requests from adult literacy and upgrading coordinators, tutors, and learners for professional development through resources and training.

In partnership with community groups, educational institutions, business, and labour and with funding through the National Literacy Secretariat and the Adult Education Section of the Nova Scotia Department of Education has developed a number of resources to support adult learning. These include the *Tutor and Instructor Certification Program*; *Making it Work* video; *Mi'kmaq Past and Present: A Resource Guide*; and *Learning Together* workshop series, a family literacy program.

One of the most recent projects developed by the Adult Education Section, in partnership with the Nova Scotia School Boards Association, is the Family Learning Resource Kit and workshop series. Family learning has been identified throughout the province as a collaborative and developmental process among families, communities, and institutions to encourage and increase parental involvement in children's learning. ThinkTV has been designed to complement the Family Learning Workshop series.

ThinkTV was developed by the Adult Education Section, co-sponsored by the Association for Media Literacy of Nova Scotia, and funded by the National Literacy Secretariat of Human Resources Development Canada. Its purpose is to promote family learning with emphasis on the importance of developing critical thinking skills through everyday activities, such as television viewing. This project addressed the need for people to deal critically and analytically with the media and its role in their lives and was a response to the need to equip people with strategies for enhancing an important life skill.

Critical thinking skills facilitate discussion between parents and children about the nature and meaning of the things they read, listen to, view, and write about in their daily lives. ThinkTV may be viewed as companion to Family Learning or as a stand-alone training model.

Literacy for the Information Age

According to the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), released in 1996, literacy is defined as *the ability to understand and employ printed information in daily activities, at home, at work, and in the community – to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential.*

This definition suited the purposes of providing comparable data on the literacy skills of adults across eight participating industrialized countries, and tests of everyday reading tasks of varying difficulty were administered.

Literacy in the information age involves much more than the ability to read, understand, and use printed information on a page. People need to regularly write, compute, solve problems, and think creatively to maintain and strengthen literacy skills. In addition, people need to be able to make sense of a wide variety of visual, audio, and electronic sources of information. Television, newspapers, magazines, popular fiction, radio, conversation, movies, video games, computers, and the Internet are all influential sources of information, ideas, and entertainment.

The Importance of Critical Thinking

Studies demonstrate that mass media have a considerable impact on the educational development of adults and children. Virtually all information about the world, beyond immediate experience, comes through the media. If the media simply reflected reality, this would not be a problem. However, each medium of communication constructs or "codifies" reality in different ways, so that messages are not neutral, or value-free.

The basic skills of reading, writing, listening, and viewing are inferential skills, which rely on a particular view of the world to give them context. If these basic skills are applied in the absence of critical thought, the message being received cannot be organized, analysed, or synthesized in any meaningful way. The person receiving the message is therefore unaware of how their view of the world is being shaped and the many ways their biases, desires, and goals are being dictated.

Critical thinking skills bring into play background knowledge, prediction skills, and an ability to synthesize information into a meaningful framework. This requires critical, reflective positions on the elements, structure, and ideology of messages. For this reason, critical thinking skills strengthen and reinforce reading and writing skills. Critical thinking is a positive and productive process that involves questioning assumptions, analysing context, detecting bias, and seeking alternative points of view and sources of information.

There is so much information to deal with, and from so many sources, that people need to know how to think, in order to learn what to think.

Dr. Stephen D. Brookfield, an adult educator who began his career in the United Kingdom and now works in the United States, believes that critical thinking is much more than an abstract, higher-order pastime for academics and successful students. He says that critical thinking is a lived activity, something everyone needs "...as we struggle to build relationships, find meaning and satisfaction in work and understand a political world portrayed through the distancing lens of the TV camera." In other words, critical thinking is a skill for everyday living.

The critical thinking process involves several clearly defined phases that can be learned. ThinkTV teaches the phases and the skills of critical thinking through understanding and managing the influence of television. Developing critical viewing skills, or media literacy, through a critical thinking approach, combines the ideas and writings of Dr. Brookfield with the methods and practices of many media literacy educators in Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and the United States.

Focus on Television

Many adults and their children may not have access to the more sophisticated, and expensive, sources of information, such as computers and online services, but they almost always have a television. Most homes have at least one television. It is the main source of news, sports, entertainment, and general knowledge for most Canadians. In some cases it is the only source. Television influences how we learn and what we learn and affects attitudes about work, school, politics, and social relationships

ThinkTV takes advantage of the opportunity to teach critical thinking through the access that people, parents, and children have to television in their everyday lives.

Focus on Parents and Children

For all learners, home is the first and most important learning environment. From a very early age, children learn best from stories told in the home and examples set by other family members. Parents, grandparents, and other adults are important sources for story telling.

In Paul Kropp's book, *The Reading Solution: Making Your Child a Reader for Life*, he states, "Study after study has shown that the most important factors are, number one, books in the home and, number two, the attitude of the parents towards reading – basically, modelling behaviour. Do the parents themselves read?"

A suggestion he makes to encourage family learning is that parents control their children's television watching. "Statistics really do indicate that a child who watches over three hours of television a day is at risk – in terms of reading, in terms of school work, in terms of self-esteem, in terms of attitude," he says.

Parents who want to create a supportive learning environment need to understand the influence of television on their children and how to use it.

Parents with low literacy skills often feel unable to discuss important ideas and issues with their children because they cannot read what their children are reading or do not know how to go about encouraging family learning. Television can provide a common text for parents and children to enjoy, discuss, and learn from together. Further, the development of critical viewing and thinking must start in a comfortable environment.

Critical Thinking

Key Concepts of Critical Thinking

Stephen Brookfield's work is concerned with developing critical thinking about many aspects of life. These key concepts about critical thinking are adapted to apply to television, since that is the focus of ThinkTV.

1. **Critical thinking is a productive and positive activity.**

Many people think that the purpose of thinking critically about television is to find all the faults and eliminate them. Television can pose problems for people, especially for parents. It can be intrusive, inappropriate, and time wasting. However, television also provides enjoyment and information that can enhance lives. Thinking critically about television, or any other aspect of life, can increase understanding so that something positive can be done or learned.

2. **Critical thinking is a process, not an outcome.**

Critical thinking is about how to think, not what to think. It is an ongoing process that usually begins with questions. The process doesn't end, but often leads to a new question. The critical thinking process arises from a critical attitude or stance. That attitude has been described as "critical mindedness." It includes curiosity, open-mindedness, scepticism, and persistence. Once developed, critical mindedness and the critical thinking process can be applied to any text or medium and to all aspects of life. For example, people who develop a critical stance toward the local evening television newscast will continue to apply it to the national newscast, the daily newspaper, magazines, and events in the community.

3. Critical thinking can be triggered by positive events as well as negative ones.

Critical thinking usually starts with something unsettling that "gets people thinking" and causes them to question what they thought they already knew. It is common for parents of young children to start thinking critically and negatively about television after they see the violence of cartoons. A positive trigger can happen when a parent encourages children to watch an educational program and they discover that it wasn't "boring" after all. Children may start to think differently about what is watched at other times. Parents may start to rethink assumptions they make about television programs, how their children interpret them, and how they can deal with them.

4. Critical thinking involves feelings as well as reasons.

Some people think that critical thinking has no room for emotions. They think that being rational and logical is most important and that emotions get in the way. This is a mistake. It is natural for people to experience anxiety and fear when they start questioning or challenging their own and others' beliefs. People may be disappointed to see a program about the special effects used to make something look real and may resist believing the information. However, that feeling of disappointment could trigger an important critical thinking episode leading to an understanding of the difference between reality and fantasy in television. The feeling of disappointment must be acknowledged before it can lead to new learning.

Other emotions people may experience in critical thinking processes are excitement at seeing things in new ways and increased confidence at feeling more in control of their lives. However, some people may resist thinking critically about ideas they have held for a long time. When people start to doubt ideas or opinions that have made them feel secure, they can become very uncomfortable. People's feelings, and the struggles they may have with entrenched feelings, need to be respected.

People learn from their experiences, and those experiences usually involve the senses and feelings. Television affects feelings first. Sounds, moving pictures, pace of editing, and special effects all combine to give viewers the feeling of an experience. Critical viewers will be able to name those feelings and understand how they influence thinking and affect viewing.

The Components of the Critical Thinking Process

The critical thinking process has four main components:

1. Questioning Assumptions

An assumption is something we think we know already, for example: "Taxes are too high," "Kids don't learn anything from television," "Canadian television is better than American." When people think critically about television or other media, they need to examine their own assumptions and also those of the people behind the television cameras.
When identifying your own assumptions, ask questions such as: What do I know about this already? How do I

know what I know? Where did I get that idea? How does that idea compare to my experience?

When identifying the assumptions that the TV program and commercial makers hold about you, ask questions such as: Who do they think I am? What do they think I believe or value? Why do they think that? How does their idea of who I am compare to my own experience?

2. Detecting Bias

Ideas or information presented from one particular point of view are said to be biased. Detecting bias is especially important when dealing with television because it presents information as "authoritative."

People often assume that television and other media are objective or unbiased, but this is not the case. Critical thinking involves knowing that most information is presented from a specific point of view. Critical thinking involves finding out whose point of view is being expressed and whose point of view is left out.

To find bias or point of view, ask questions such as: What is the source of this information or idea? What do the people who made this have to gain by presenting this information? What information is left out? Could someone be harmed by this information and the way it is presented?

3. Analysing Context

Context refers to factors that could affect an idea or action and how it is interpreted. For example, watching a televised hockey game in the context of a bar full of fans is a completely different experience from watching the same game alone at home. A parent may be much fussier about a child's table manners in the context of a restaurant than at home.

To identify the context, ask questions such as: Who is telling the story? What do they have to gain or lose from this story or event? When did this event take place? Where did this idea come from?

4. Seeking Alternative Points of View and Sources of Information.

Critical thinking involves seeking alternative points of view or trying to imagine other ways of seeing things. It also involves looking for other sources of information. For example, a critical thinker will check the prices at several stores before believing an ad for the store that says it has the lowest prices. The critical thinker will put him/herself in someone else's shoes. An adult viewer of a violent scene in a music video will try to imagine how a young person might interpret it.

To find alternatives, ask questions such as: Is there another way to look at this? Whose point of view is included here? Whose is left out? Where could I get more information about this? Who would agree with this point of view? Who would disagree? Why?

The Five Phases of Critical Thinking

The critical thinking process has five phases. A full cycle of critical thinking as described below usually leads to another triggering event and another journey through the critical thinking process. New assumptions may be challenged, new information gathered, and new approaches developed.

As they pass through these phases, critical thinkers will engage the four components of critical thinking. At every point, they identify and challenge old assumptions, analyse context, look for bias, and seek alternatives.

Phase 1: Trigger Event

Most people are prompted to start thinking critically by some kind of external event or idea. This is usually unexpected and causes some kind of inner discomfort or confusion. Examples include divorce, unemployment, or moving house. Positive trigger events can include falling in love or discovering a new piece of information, something that makes someone exclaim, "I didn't know that!"

Phase 2: Appraisal

After the triggering event, an uncomfortable period of doubt may follow. This phase can involve an attempt to make light of a concern. For example, "I grew up watching cops and robbers shows and I turned out all right. What's the big worry about TV violence anyway?" Others may keep worrying through this stage and decide they need to find another approach to dealing with the issue.

Phase 3: Exploration

In this phase, people accept that they are moving toward some kind of change or transformation. They ask questions, develop options, and make discoveries. They say to themselves, "Okay, what do I have to do to get on with the job of dealing with this situation?" They find out about other people who are dealing with similar things. They gather more information.

For example, they may watch some television programs that other people think are violent. They may rent some videos of the kind of cops and robbers shows they watched as a child and ask themselves what has changed. They may read some articles or books about TV violence.

Phase 4: Finding Alternatives

This phase can also be called the transition stage when old ideas are left behind and new ways of thinking or acting are started. They feel comfortable enough to say, "I used to believe that, but now I have reason to change my mind." Or, "I used to be so sure of my opinion on this but now I have mixed feelings." For example, the viewer who thought concerns about violence were exaggerated leaves behind his old assumption that TV violence is the same as it was when he was a child.

In this phase, some old ideas can be clarified instead of left behind. Decisions are made about how far change can go and how fast. For example, the viewer may have been so shocked by the violence he saw on television that he thought of getting rid of the television altogether, but he may reject that option after discussing it with his family.

Phase 5: Integration

This phase involves finding ways to fit new ideas and information into everyday lives. In some cases this means making major changes. In other cases, it means confirming the old ideas. For example, the viewer may find something else for his young children to do on Saturday instead of watching cartoons. He may decide to monitor his older child's viewing more closely and discuss it with the rest of the family. Part of his old idea–that the cops and robbers shows were innocent and mild forms of TV violence–may be confirmed. He may decide to share his enjoyment of those with his kids and avoid some of the new, more violent programs. He may decide that he would like broadcasters to show more of the old programs, which may trigger a whole new critical thinking process.

Media Literacy

Critical thinking strategies can be applied to sources of information other than television, and the transfer of these skills is important. The ability to think critically about all mass media is called media literacy. Media literacy education aims to increase people's understanding and enjoyment of mass media: how it works, how it produces meaning, how it is organized, and how to use it.

Effective users of television, "critical viewers," are more likely to be effective users of other media. Likewise, parents who are concerned about their children's involvement with computer and video games can apply some of the same approaches to those media as they would to their children's use of television.

Key Concepts about Critical Viewing and Media Literacy

Media literacy educators in Canada base their teaching on key concepts of media literacy. These concepts have been adapted here as they relate to television and to parents in particular.

1. Television is serious business.
Television has a serious impact on our society. It affects everyone, those who watch and those who do not watch. It affects attitudes about relationships, work, politics, the environment, and social issues. *TV Basics*, a publication of the Television Bureau of Canada, reported that in 1995–96, 99 per cent of Canadian homes had at least one television; 55 per cent had more than one. Canadians of all ages spend an average of 21 hours, almost one full day, per week watching television.

Television is a multi-billion dollar industry and a major part of the economy. Billions of dollars are spent every year on television equipment, production, and advertising. Governments generate millions of dollars by taxing television services. The first purpose of television is to make money for the people who own and work in the business. This fact affects the content and quality of everything that is seen on television, including when programs and commercials are seen, how often, and where. Awareness of how commercial concerns influence the products of television is an important component of critical media literacy.

2. All television messages are made up.
Television does not simply present reality. It represents someone else's version of reality.

The messages we see on television have been carefully constructed to serve a specific purpose. The purpose of a commercial is obviously to persuade viewers to buy a product. Commercials are the most carefully constructed and expensive productions on television. Newscasts are carefully constructed versions of reality, and news reports of the same event can be very different depending on the reporter and the broadcaster. Television drama is carefully crafted to reflect the reality of some people and the fantasies of others, and sitcom characters can become so familiar that some viewers confuse the character with the actor. The ability to understand the difference between a direct experience (reality) and the constructed representation of an experience (television) is an important part of media literacy.

3. **Television uses special techniques to get ideas across and make viewers react a certain way.**

Camera angle, camera movement, quality of light, pace of editing, and tempo of music are all techniques that affect what we see on television and what it means. For example, a close-up of a monster's face that fills the screen can be much scarier than a shot of the monster in the distance. A car chase is more exciting when it has a loud rock music sound track than if it has chamber music in the background. When viewers understand how a television message is made, the techniques that are used, and how they affect meaning, they will become more active and discerning viewers who are better able to make meaning for themselves.

4. **Viewers affect the meaning of television messages.**

Viewers each use their own experience and feelings to make sense of television programs. Viewers who live in a strike-torn community will have a different understanding of the news reports than viewers who don't live there. Hockey players will appreciate the skill and strategy of a televised hockey game differently than people who have never played hockey. Viewers who are aware that they affect meaning can make better use of television.

5. **Television affects the way we see our own lives and the rest of the world.**

In most Canadian homes, the television is on an average of six hours per day. In fact, young children and senior citizens often spend more time watching social and personal relationships on television than directly interacting with other people.

Critical viewers of television understand that the ideas and information on television are represented with someone else's values, attitudes, observations, and conclusions. They ask themselves whose point of view is being presented, who is benefiting, and who is being left out and why. They can seek alternative sources of information, such as other family members, friends, print, and radio, to confirm or challenge the views presented on television. They can decide when to be alert critical viewers and when to just sit back and relax.

6. **Television must be managed in the home.**

People can learn how to use television in the home. Children learn from the leadership and example set by parents or other household members to "put television in its place." It can play a positive and enjoyable role in family life when it is used wisely and balanced with other activities.

Strategies for Developing Critical Thinkers and Viewers

The activities, exercises, and discussions in this manual are designed to take participants through the critical thinking process to develop an understanding of the key concepts of media literacy.

It is most important for people to know how to think and to think for themselves. People are constantly being told what they should think and do, but critical thinkers can decide what to think.

The best way to teach thinking is to provide opportunities for people to explore their own thinking processes and to learn how other people think. Learning to think critically is like learning to ride a bicycle. Nobody ever learned to ride a bike by being lectured about the physics of balance and momentum. They have to practise, wobble, fall, and try again. The person teaching them can only inspire, support, challenge, and encourage.

1. Practise the Reality Check

The reality check strategy involves carefully identifying and naming situations or circumstances as they exist before deciding whether changes in thinking are necessary. For example, discussions on family television viewing habits are often based on guesses, assumptions, and opinions. However, if someone gathers information from direct personal experience, such as by documenting family viewing habits in a log, the appraisal and exploration phases of critical thinking about family viewing can be made based on fact. A reality check asks people to step back, check their assumptions, and start alternative thinking if needed. Detecting bias and knowing how to tell the difference between opinion and fact are important components of critical thinking.

2. Talk about Television

Despite all the talk about television, people seem reluctant to discuss what it means to them. One appealing thing about television is that it takes us beyond the realm of words. The art of television is its ability to engage the senses. Sight, sound, and motion work together to create powerful feelings and impressions. Some viewers fear that talking about those feelings will ruin their enjoyable experience; other viewers suspect that television is manipulating them and may become cynically silent for fear they will look foolish for being taken in by it. Many viewers would like to understand how television works on them but don't have the words to describe what they are feeling.

However, thinking and talking about the influence of television can be a trigger for people to understand, clarify, and manage television. Research shows that simply talking about television with children can reduce negative behaviours commonly associated with television viewing. Many adults need help talking about television before they can talk effectively to their kids about it.

In the ThinkTV workshops, participants will learn the words to describe what they see and feel. They will also ask questions about what they see and how it affects them and others. They will have opportunities to express opinions and share observations about how television affects their families, communities, and society. They will be encouraged to discuss television in ways that will develop their critical understanding and enhance their enjoyment of it.

3. Find Questions

One of the best ways to develop critical thinking skills and media literacy is to ask questions that will lead to greater understanding, not necessarily correct answers. At every phase of the critical thinking process, finding questions is a key activity as well as asking them effectively and asking them in the right place and the right time. When the goal of learning is to find the right answer rather than to increase understanding, the phases of critical thinking cannot be explored. It is also important that television viewers not assume that television provides the right answers to questions.

One of the best ways parents can encourage children to talk about television is to ask them questions. In ThinkTV workshops, parents will practise finding questions that will help their children become critical thinkers and viewers.

4. Watch Television

Most people don't think they need to learn how to watch television, but viewers who let sounds and images wash over them are not thinking critically about what they are watching. To really watch critically, viewers must be able to watch in a way that creates some distance between the visual and sensory experience and makes it possible to describe and analyse the program and the experience of viewing. This can be done by taking a program apart. Watching the same thing several times, watching with no sound, naming camera movements and angles, and listening with no picture are all ways of creating distance between the program and the viewer. These viewing techniques also teach about how a program is put together and how it creates meaning and influence.

Developing a "second set of eyes" helps viewers have the probing eyes of a critic. If they only have one set of eyes to choose from, they only see what others want them to see. With a second set of eyes, people have the option of seeing many different views. The appraisal, exploration, and alternative phases of the critical thinking process are easier to do if people can see things from more than one point of view. If there is a fear that taking television apart will ruin their enjoyment of television, critical viewers can choose to use their "regular set of eyes" when they want to relax and enjoy a favourite program.

Developing a second set of eyes can also mean imagining how someone else might see the same program. For example, how would an elderly rural person make sense of a sitcom meant for urban young people? How would an advertiser view a program that does not promote their product? Asking such questions generates discussion and reflection.

The facilitator of ThinkTV workshops will help participants to develop a second set of eyes.

Role of the Workshop Facilitator

The role of the workshop facilitator is to provide participants with practical opportunities to develop new ways of thinking about television through critical thinking and to practise ways to help their children become critical viewers. To effectively involve workshop participants in discussion and activities to practise the strategies learned, the facilitator must understand the key concepts of literacy, critical thinking, media literacy, and adult learning. The following introductory information is essential background reading for a workshop facilitator.

Understanding How Adults Learn

Adults returning to an educational program have often been away from a formal school environment for many years and may experience high levels of anxiety about "learning." They often lack confidence and undervalue their skills and problem-solving and decision-making abilities. Consequently, many adult learners are unwilling to take risks, such as voicing an opinion, for fear of making a mistake.

Traditional classroom settings and formal teaching techniques can produce an intimidating environment that is not conducive to learning and may be inhibiting at best. Yet this is what many adults expect: to be "taught" rather than to "learn" through their active participation in a program. It is crucial to create an environment that is relaxed, friendly, and informal. Initially, this setting might seem peculiar to adults; in time as group dynamics develop, learning will occur naturally as participants take individual responsibility for goal setting and, subsequently, group ownership of the program.

Effective adult educators/facilitators respect and recognize that adult learners possess a wide range of skills and knowledge gained through life's experiences. Most adults have many responsibilities and are used to making decisions for themselves and their families. In this way, they differ from children in a classroom because, as adults, their opinions, attitudes, values, and beliefs have already been shaped by previous experiences.

Adults may come to a program from a variety of backgrounds and with different motivational factors. However, the common criteria are the program content (curriculum) and its relevancy to their lives. They want learning to be concrete and personal, not rooted in the abstract. These workshops are designed to incorporate good practice in a program meant to be a positive learning experience for both facilitator and participants. The facilitator's role is to draw upon the experiences and expertise of the group to prompt ideas, promote discussion, formulate and rationalize opinions, and sharpen skills to effectively manage television in the home.

Guidelines for Applying Adult Education Principles

ENCOURAGE learning by first creating a comfortable, friendly environment where the open exchange of ideas can take place.

DEMONSTRATE the value of diverse knowledge, experiences, and attitudes of participants by welcoming their input, keeping the workshops flexible, and incorporating personal goals.

PROVIDE lots of opportunities for participants to put into practice what they learn.

PRESENT information using terms and examples that participants will understand.

CONSIDER the literacy skill levels of workshop participants and tailor the program appropriately by providing a variety of learning resources and approaches.

ENCOURAGE critical thinking by modelling the process. Critical thinking involves questioning assumptions, analysing context, detecting bias, and seeking alternative points of view and sources of information. By verbalizing assumptions, participants will have opportunities to explore their own thinking processes.

Examining Your Own Assumptions

1. Be a co-learner.

The workshop facilitator has the important job of "training the trainers," the parents who will want to pass on their new skills to their children. In this role, it is important to be regarded as a co-learner, someone interested in exploring the positive, as well as the negative, aspects of television to equip participants with decision-making tools to benefit themselves and their children.

2. Realize that parents use television for a variety of reasons.

Parents recognize the benefits of educational television and want children to learn from the programs they value. Parents also know the negative side of television, but may be ill equipped for a variety of reasons to manage family viewing of programs that may be violent or otherwise inappropriate.

Some parents do not have the financial or transportation resources to provide alternatives to television, such as books, educational toys, art supplies, computers, music lessons, and sports activities. Many parents are frustrated that they cannot afford things that children see advertised on television.

There are some valid, practical reasons for using television as a "babysitter." Parents with too many demands on their time may need to use television to occupy demanding children. In two-parent families, one parent may not support the other's attempt to change the way they use television in their home. Also, in some neighbourhoods, children may be safer indoors watching television than outside in a dangerous street setting. Parents with physical or emotional disabilities often need television to entertain and educate their children when their disability makes alternatives inaccessible.

There are no "right" answers about television viewing and the facilitator is not an expert and cannot be judgmental about family viewing habits. The last thing parents need to be told is that they are bad parents for letting their children watch television in the first place.

Parents will be much more inclined to start to explore the way they use television if these kinds of barriers to change are acknowledged and accepted. Creative, realistic ideas are more likely to develop in an atmosphere of understanding and support.

3. **People may feel that television viewing is their private business.**

Some people are emotionally attached to certain programs and characters. This workshop series is going to challenge viewers to look at television in very different ways and may change the way they see it. Some may be resistant and concerned that they will be judged by what they watch. Encourage participants to ask questions of one another regarding their viewing preferences, rather than make judgments or negative comments.

4. **Stay neutral about popular television controversies.**

Most television does not tend to fully explore controversial topics. Instead, many issues are presented as having only two, polarized sides. Viewers feel compelled to take a position on one side or another and often develop strong, one-sided opinions. The role of the workshop leader is not to take one of two sides, but to encourage participants to find other ways of looking at the issues and to challenge the assumptions and information they use to make their decisions.

5. **Model how to openly explore controversial questions and consider a wide range of possible interpretations.**

Feel free to state your own opinions if appropriate, but make it clear that it is your opinion and describe the information or experience you base it on.

Expect to be challenged, and welcome every challenge as an indication of critical thinking or at least an opportunity to practise it.

Important Information about Copyright

Laws you must follow when working with television

The best way to help adults and children develop critical thinking skills is to study the programs they watch and talk about them. The most timely, straightforward, and practical way to do this may seem to be to tape those programs directly from the TV and use the tapes in the workshop. However, under Canadian copyright law, unless you have permission from the copyright holder, it is illegal to do so.

WARNING! If you tape programs directly (or off-air) and show them in an educational or school setting, you may be breaking the law.

There are two areas of law in Canada which must be respected when working with television and videotapes.

Copyright

Copyright laws protect the financial and quality interests of creators of works of art, entertainment, and information. These laws say that the creator is the only person who has the right to make copies of their work and sell them.

Copyright holders can assign their rights to publishers or distributors. They can also give permission to make a copy for a specific purpose. You may have seen the words "reprinted with permission" in some publications. That should mean it is a legal copy because the copyright owner gave the permission.

Copyright laws apply to television programs too. It is generally accepted that you can tape programs off-air if you just want to view the program at

TIPS FOR WORKING WITH TELEVISION

You will need the following equipment to teach about television:

- a television set or monitor. If you are working with more that three or four people, the monitor should have a 25-inch screen or larger.
- a video cassette recorder (VCR) which plays half-inch VHS video cassettes. This is what most home VCRs play.
- a remote control. This is not absolutely necessary but is very convenient and means you won't have to stand beside the VCR to stop, start, fast forward, and rewind.
- a cable, a satellite receiver, an outside aerial or an aerial on the TV, if you plan to watch TV off-air during your sessions.

Before each workshop session:

- Check your equipment and tapes to make sure they are in good working order. Make sure the fast forward and fast rewind functions are working well and that the VCR won't damage borrowed tapes.
- Position the television set or monitor so that all participants can see it without moving from their seats. It is best to have it slightly elevated to approximately the head-height of a person standing in the room.
- Set the sound to low. If you have the volume set at listening level and turn the TV on without a tape, some sets make a very loud "snow" sound. Remember to turn up the sound when you start the tape.
- Cue all the tapes to a few seconds before the place where you want them to start. This will save a lot of time in the group. If you plan to use several clips on the same tape, cue the tape to the beginning, set the counter to "000," fast forward to each section you want to use and note the number on a piece of paper. If you plan to look at one part of a tape several times, set the counter on the VCR to "000" when you put the tape in. This will make it easier to find your start place. Do this only if you are not using another clip on the same tape.

another time. This is known as "time shifting." It is *not* legal to sell those tapes. It is not legal to show those tapes in a public place.

Copyright laws also apply to videotapes you purchase or borrow. It is not legal to make copies of those tapes or to show them in public places. Please see below for some important exceptions to these rules.

Public Performance

In Canada, a classroom is considered a public place. This means that, unless you obtain prior permission, it is *not* legal to show a program taped off-air or from another source for educational use or in any public place.

You may have purchased, borrowed, or rented a videotape. But those programs are generally licensed for private use only and do not include public performance rights for schools or other educational settings. It is the responsibility of the person using a purchased, rented, or borrowed videotape to ensure that it has a performance licence for educational use in Canada.

Exceptions to the Rules

Educational Clearances

Some videotapes have a statement on the video jacket or at the beginning of the tape that allows them to be used in the classroom and other public places for non-profit educational purposes. Video stores *don't* usually carry video tapes with educational clearances. Libraries may have some videotapes with educational clearances. Teacher resource centres, and Department of Education's Education Media Library distribute tapes that have been cleared for classroom use. These may include some feature films. In these cases, resource centres pay a public performance license fee to the copyright holder.

Hollywood director Stephen Spielberg recently announced that any school could use his film *Schindler's List* in the classroom. The AIDS awareness video *Time Out with Magic Johnson and Arsenio Hall* is available in many video stores and can be used in classrooms without penalty.
Salter Street Films Limited, the producers of the satirical newscast "This Hour Has 22 Minutes," have given permission for off-air tapes of that program to be made and used by anyone conducting ThinkTV workshops.

The National Film Board of Canada

Most productions by the National Film Board of Canada can be used for non-profit educational purposes. These are often available in video stores and public libraries.

Cable in the Classroom

Cable in the Classroom is a service that allows educators to tape off-air certain copyright-cleared, commercial-free programs free of charge. A schedule is available from most local cable companies, by subscription, and on the Internet. Teachers' guides are also available for most programs. This service was started in Canada in 1995 by cable television companies across Canada.

Getting Permission

It is possible to obtain permission to use programs you have taped off-air. Please note that permission should be obtained before taping the program. Often a phone call or written request to the television station will result in the permission you need.

Be sure to explain that it is for non-profit educational purposes only.

EXAMPLE: My name is Verity Blank. I am working with a group of parents in a literacy/upgrading/parent group and the program "Jumping Jiminy" has come up in our discussion. We would like to look at one episode in the class/group and discuss it. Could I please have your permission to show it or could you direct me to the person who could give me permission?"

Most producers want their work to be seen by as many people as possible. If they are convinced you aren't showing it to make money, many producers are happy to give permission.

Changes to Canada's Copyright and Public Performance Laws

Canada's copyright laws are being revised through Bill C32. Many people and organizations, including the Council of Ministers of Education Canada, have asked the federal government to include a clause to allow educators to use certain copyrighted material, including television programs, free of charge, for limited non-profit educational purposes. As of May 1999, this part of Bill C32 was still under discussion.

Contents of the Workshops

The ThinkTV manual will assist the facilitator to deliver each ThinkTV workshop by providing the following:

- a workshop overview and outcomes
- the critical thinking links, media literacy links and critical viewing strategies the workshop will reinforce
- background reading
- workshop outline: the purpose and workshop agenda
- materials required
- workshop activities
- ideas for adapting workshops
- other activities
- handouts
- overheads
- resources

OVERVIEW OF WORKSHOPS

Core Workshops • Managing Television at Home

Workshop 1: Getting Serious about Television

Participants will explore why they should take television seriously as an influence on children. They will develop questions about television to help them understand television better. Workshop 1 provides the triggering event for thinking critically about television and encourages learners to find questions that will guide them through the *ThinkTV* process.

Workshop 2: Putting TV in Its Place

Workshop 2 will focus on understanding and managing the way learners and their families use television in the home. The workshop will help participants find a good place for television in their homes and in their families. The workshop also deals with intentionally putting television in its place and keeping it there so it can better serve the entertainment and learning needs of all family members, especially children.

Workshop 3: Using TV to Support School Success

In Workshop 3, participants will learn how to encourage active viewing. They will learn to identify and locate programs that can support school success for their own children, and they will find ways to link television to other learning resources such as games, maps, books, and Internet sites. They will also explore how they can use television to stimulate and support learning even if the programs do not appear to have much educational value.

Optional Workshops • Reading TV: The Basics

Workshop 4: The Language of TV

Workshop 4 provides participants with opportunities to develop their analytical skills and apply them to television production techniques. They will begin to engage their second set of eyes–the eyes of the informed and critical viewer.

Participants will learn to recognize and describe camera angles, camera movements, editing techniques, sound effects, and special effects, and they will explore how these techniques affect viewers and contribute to meaning.

Workshop 5: The Language of Advertising

Workshop 5 explores the commercial aspect of television and how it influences viewers and programs. Participants will learn the language of advertising, how television makes money from advertising, and how advertising affects programs and scheduling. They will also discuss how advertisers think about audiences. They will learn how ads are constructed carefully to appeal to certain audiences and will practise deconstructing television ads to understand their persuasive techniques and their intended impact.

Resources

Critical Thinking Supplement to Becoming a Master Student (student manual), Vincent Ryan Ruggiero
Practical lesson plans and worksheets are designed for secondary-level students to apply critical thinking to a variety of situations including television.

Critical Thinking: Helping Students Learn Reflectively [book, 87 pp], S. Samuel Shermis, ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, EDINFO Press, 1992
This short, readable book explains some of the obstacles to teaching reflectively, presents a theory of reflective inquiry, and provides a model of reflective thinking in action as well as some of the implications of applied critical inquiry for schools. Although this book is directed at teachers in the public school system, it provides important information for educators who work with adult learners as well.

Educating for Citizenship: New Dimensions [article, 5 pp], Wilma S. Longstreet, in Social Education, January 1989

**Mass Media and Popular Culture: Version 2* [book and teachers' resource binder], Barry Duncan et al, Harcourt Brace and Company, Canada, 1996
The revised version of the classic media literacy textbook for secondary schools by four of the leading media educators in Canada. The Teacher's Resource Binder provides articles, teaching strategies, assessment tools, and media skills activities. All activities are cross-referenced for use with *Scanning Television.*

* Indicates that resource is included in ThinkTV Resources collection at each Literacy Resource Centre. (See Where to Find Resources.)

** Indicates that resource is included only at the Nova Scotia Department of Education, Metro Region Literacy Resource Centre. (See Where to Find Resources.)

Media Literacy, Adult Learning and Critical Thinking: A Crucial Connection for Research and Practice [article, 9 pp], Stephen D. Brookfield in Building Tomorrow's Research Agenda for Lifelong Learning, A Symposium, Fort Collin, Colorado, May 19, 1987 edited by Robert A. Fellenz and Gary J. Conti.

Nobody's Perfect: Leader's Guide and Training Manual, Health Canada and Departments of Health in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador, 1989
A parent education program for parents who do not have enough money, time, education, or support to make raising children easy. The leader's guide and training manual were developed through an extensive process and provide an excellent resource for adult education methods and approaches. For more information, contact Health Canada or provincial Departments of Health or Community Services.

** *P.A.L.S. Parents Assist Learning and Schooling*, Human Resources Development Canada, Memramcook Institute, 1994.
An informal training program designed to encourage parents to play active roles in their children's education. For more information contact the Canadian Home and School and Parent-Teacher Federation 858 Bank Street, Suite 104, Ottawa, ON K1S 3W3, (613) 234-7292 or your provincial Home and School Association. (See Where to Find Resources.)

* *Screening Images: Ideas for Media Education* [book], Chris Worsnop, Wright Communications, 1994
This short, readable book gives an overview of the main issues and approaches to media education based on more than 20 years of teaching by the author. The chapter and activity section *Knowing How You Know* gives a good description of the reflective aspect of critical thinking and its central role in media education. The next chapter and activity section, *Orthodoxy is the Enemy*, describe some of the common pitfalls of approaching media education and how to avoid them.

Television Literacy for Adults: Learning to See TV [article, 4 pp], Rhonda S. Robinson, Media and Adult Learning, Vol. 9, no.1, Northern Illinois University, 1986
Provides encouragement and ideas for linking television literacy to reading and writing literacy.

Tutor and Instructor Training and Certification Program, Nova Scotia Department of Education and Culture, 1991.
A training program for tutors and instructors working with adult learners in literacy programs, both one-to-one and groups. For more information about the 30-hour training program contact Nova Scotia Literacy Resource Centres. (See Where to Find Resources.)

Internet Sites

Centre for Critical Thinking
http://www.criticalthinking.org
Extensive information and resources for teaching critical thinking in school and university settings.

Jesuit Communication Project
http://interact.uoregon.edu/MediaLit/FA/JCPHomePage
The largest collection of media education resources in Canada.

Media Awareness Network
http://www.schoolnet.ca/MediaNet
Canada's online service dedicated to media education and media issues affecting children includes resources for parents, teachers, and kids. It provides information about quality children's programs

Media Literacy On-line Project
http://interact.uoregon.edu/MediaLit/Homepage
This site includes media literacy resources and links to sites worldwide.

Managing Television at Home

For many parents, caregivers, and educators, the basic concern about television is that children and other learners are being used by it and not learning much of value from it. The first step toward developing critical, media-literate viewers, especially children, is to learn how to manage television at home. When viewers take television seriously enough to manage it, they can make better choices and use television wisely to support their own learning and development.

In the three core workshops of ThinkTV, participants will learn how to gain some control over the way television is used in their families. They will discover why and how they should manage television use and make decisions about time spent viewing and program content. They will also learn how to use TV to support school success and other educational goals.

These workshops introduce three characters as metaphors for television to encourage participants to think about television as a relationship in which viewers participate rather than as an external influence beyond their control. When people start to think of their involvement with television as a relationship, they are better able to change how they use it and think about it.

In WORKSHOP 1, Getting Serious about Television, television is portrayed as a **captivating stranger** who asks to enter the home. This raises questions about the role television plays in viewers' lives. It also raises other critical questions about television, such as who pays for it, where it comes from, how much time it involves, its advantage to viewers, and the values and attitudes it conveys and why.

In WORKSHOP 2, Putting TV in Its Place, participants are asked to think of television as an **unruly houseguest** who is in danger of taking over the household. This leads participants to set some rules and guidelines for their family's relationship with television, especially regarding time limits and program content.

WORKSHOP 3, Using TV to Support School Success, presents television as the **ideal nanny** who helps children with their schoolwork, tells stories with positive values, and is almost too good to be true. Participants will learn to make the best use of educational television and how to connect educational activities to television programs. Ideally, parents can use television to support school success and help develop social skills.

WORKSHOP 1

Getting Serious about Television

Overview 1.5

Background Reading 1.6

Workshop Outline 1.11

Workshop Activities 1.13

Ideas for Adapting This Workshop 1.23

Other Activities 1.24

Handouts 1.27

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Overheads

Overview

Imagine you are preparing to lead a group on an expedition into unfamiliar territory. You will need to study a map, chart the course for the expedition, and find out what the rest of the team wants out of the expedition. Think of this workshop as the first meeting of the expeditionary team.

Participants will explore why they should take television seriously as an influence on children, thinking, and learning. They will develop questions about television to help them understand television better, and that can then be used to determine which other ThinkTV workshops would benefit the group. Workshop 1 provides the triggering event for thinking critically about television and encourages learners to find questions that will guide them through the ThinkTV process.

In Workshop 1, participants will be asked to observe the viewing habits of children over the period of a week and record them in a viewing log, which will be discussed in Workshop 2.

Outcomes

- Participants will explore why they should take television seriously as an influence on thinking and learning.
- They will develop questions about television to help them understand television better.
- Participants will be encouraged to find questions that will guide them through the ThinkTV process.

Workshop 1 will reinforce the following:

Critical Thinking Links		Media Literacy Links	Critical Viewing Strategies
Four Main Components of Critical Thinking Process	Five Common Phases of Critical Thinking	Key Concepts about Media Literacy	
✓ Questioning assumptions	✓ Trigger event	Television is serious business	✓ Reality check
Detecting bias	✓ Appraisal	All television messages are made up	✓ Talk about TV
✓ Analysing context	Exploration	Television uses special techniques to get ideas across and make viewers react a certain way	✓ Find questions
✓ Seeking alternatives	Finding alternatives	Viewers affect the meaning of television messages	Watch TV
	Integration	✓ Television affects the way we see our own lives and the rest of the world	
		✓ Television must be managed in the home	

Background Reading

Television affects all of our lives as a source of information, a means of communication, and a form of entertainment. As adults, we tend to be discriminate viewers, with individual preferences for informational and entertainment programming. Parents recognize that children are influenced by television in both positive and negative ways.

Today, the television is often viewed as just another basic appliance in the home offering a multitude of viewing channels and program choices. But nearly half a century ago when regular broadcasting began, television had a limited selection of channels, and most programs were directed at the whole family as an audience. That is rarely the case today as often programs and even channels are directed at specific age groups. Television has become big business, and networks and advertisers see a lucrative market in children's programming.

Networks and advertisers vie to attract consumers to their programs. For children this translates into advertisements centering on toys, games, fast foods, video games, and clothing. Approximately 28 per cent of the messages children see on television try to persuade them to buy something. Advertising to children does pay off because Statistics Canada reports that Canadian children from 2 to 12 spend $1.5 billion per year and influence the spending of a further $15 billion. Older children account for even more spending.

As technology advances with the introduction of video games, CD-ROMs, and the Internet the percentage of time children in Canada spend watching television is dropping (8 per cent between 1990 and 1995 among 2- to 11-year-olds). Nevertheless, Canadian children still spend an average of 2.5 hours a day watching television.

How does TV influence children's thinking and learning?

This information summarizes common concerns parents, teachers, and policy makers have about how television influences children's thinking and learning. It is not intended to provide definitive answers but to aid further exploration. Learners who are not parents may also have concerns about these influences on their own lives or on children in general.

Since the introduction of television to North America in the late 1940s, thousands of psychologists, medical doctors, educators, sociologists, and, of course, advertisers have applied many different methods, tested multiple theories, and asked many questions in the quest to find out exactly how TV affects children. With so many studies, most parents would still have trouble finding certain proof of one effect or another, even if they could understand the scientific jargon.

Three broad areas of concern about the influence of television on children are
a. how much they watch
b. what they watch
c. how they watch

Most early research dealt with the first two areas – what they watch and how much they watch. It worked from the assumption that the viewer was a passive receiver and television was the active transmitter of ideas, information, and values. This led to assumptions that certain types of programs cause behaviour and that viewers are passive consumers. Recent research challenges those assumptions based on evidence that receiver and transmitter, viewer and television interact to create meaning. This research supports the need for viewers to become critical and informed and has resulted in educators and media literacy advocates concerning themselves less with *what* children watch and more with *how* they watch.

This approach does not disregard concerns about what children are watching or how much but includes other factors. *How* children watch television and in what context can have as much influence on them as the content of the programs or the amount of time they spend watching. This approach is the basis of media literacy efforts. It addresses questions such as, Are children viewing television alone or with communicative adults? Are they thinking critically about what they are seeing and comparing it to other sources of information and entertainment? Are they selecting what they watch to serve their interests and make sense of their lives and the world they live in?

When questions about television's influence come up in discussion, the challenge will be to move participants beyond the assumption that television causes certain effects in all children or viewers. The goal will be to have learners broaden their scope and look carefully at other factors; how they interrelate; and how parents, children, and other viewers can influence the way they use television.

How much TV children watch

Many people are concerned that children are spending so much time watching television that they are missing out on other things that are important for healthy intellectual, emotional, social, and physical development, for example, homework, reading, creative play, exercise, communicating with family, and community involvement.

A child watching an average of 2.3 hours a day could be considered a moderate or average viewer. More time indicates a heavy viewer, and less time, a light viewer. Note, however, that these are not recommended viewing times, but simply a reflection of how much time most Canadian children spend watching television. This does not include the increasing amount of time children spend watching videos or playing video and computer games.

Several factors, besides age, must be considered before determining how much time children should spend with television, including how they are watching; what they are watching; with whom and why they are watching. For example, a child who actively watches four hours of television to learn how to care for a new pet might be better off than a child who watches two hours of music videos to avoid seeking help with a difficult problem.

This concern is valid and can lead to exploring questions such as: What is an appropriate place for television in children's lives? How can children learn to balance TV viewing with other activities? How can parents use television to support thinking and learning?

What TV children watch

PROGRAM CONTENT • Television presents ideas and images that too often are not appropriate for children because they can contradict or distort the values and teachings of family, school, and community. The lessons TV teaches are often so influential that some people call it the "first curriculum." In many cases TV has more impact on children than ideas and values they learn from school and families, for example, violence; stereotypes about gender, race, class, and nationality; explicit sexual behaviour; obsession with body image, snack foods, alcohol, and material possessions.

Addressing concerns about program content can lead to exploration of viewing habits. Participants should be challenged to watch programs they have opinions about but have never watched. Questions that might arise include, What do parents know about the content of the programs their children watch? What do children learn from television and how does it differ from what they learn from family, school, and community? What do parents know about programs their children watch? How can parents get involved with the influence program content has on children's lives?

These questions will be explored in a variety of ways. Participants will learn how to help children make sense of program content so they can challenge it and assess it before making a decision to use it to make sense of their own lives.

COMMERCIAL CONTENT • Many people are concerned about the commercial content of television and how it influences children. Children's programming on Canadian television has eight minutes of advertising in every hour. Other programs on Canadian channels include 12 minutes of advertising, while up to 17 minutes of each hour on American channels is taken up with ads. That means that up to 28 per cent of what children see on TV is trying to influence them to buy something, not including television programs that are tied into toy products.

Many parents find commercials to be the most frustrating and annoying aspect of television. They feel pressured by children to buy things they can't afford. Some parents are also concerned that young children can't tell the difference between a cartoon and a commercial. Others worry that children will get the idea that they are only valuable when they can buy certain things. Others are concerned that their children are being treated simply as markets for someone to make money from instead of future citizens who should be respected and taught to value themselves and others for more than their purchasing power.

Parents of adolescents are concerned about how young people are affected by the way they are portrayed on TV. Some news and entertainment shows portray them as violent, oversexed punks or criminals who need tougher treatment by parents and the law. However, teens' rebellious innovations in dress, music, and language are quickly picked up by television and sold back to them with profits going to the advertisers.

VIOLENT CONTENT • Television violence is the dominant concern among most parents, caregivers, teachers, and politicians. Children now have access to more screen violence on TV, in movies, and through computers and video games than ever before. If parents are not concerned about TV violence, they should be.

Recent studies have shown that thinking and talking with children about TV can reduce some of the negative effects of watching violent TV. The Canadian Radio and Television Commission stated in early 1996 that "... public awareness and media literacy programs represent most of the solution to TV violence."

Many parents may already have formed very definite and narrow opinions about television violence. It has been discussed widely in the media and narrowly framed as a censorship issue. The V-chip, a device intended to give parents some control over the level of violence that comes into their homes, has been legislated into use in Canada and the US. It has generated a lot of controversy, and participants may have strong opinions about it.

How children watch TV

Parents can determine how their children watch TV through observation. Children who stare fixedly at the screen with little physical movement are often considered to be "vegging out," focusing on the TV rather than a particular program. Children who are active viewers of a TV program engage all of their senses and are physically alert and moving. Parents can encourage their children to be active TV viewers by watching programs together, making comments, asking questions, and generally involving them in their viewing habits. Asking children to "think" while watching TV will contribute to the healthy development of intellectual and social skills and is the essence of media literacy and critical viewing.

Who pays for TV?

When someone offers something for free, most people ask, Who do you work for? What's the catch? or Who pays you? Understanding who pays is essential before other questions about TV can be answered.

For example, a common question parents ask is, Why are there so many commercials on TV? The answer becomes obvious, however, when viewers understand that TV is a money-making business and that commercials pay for the cost of TV programs.

Who decides what programs get on TV? When viewers understand that the programs are on TV to attract viewers to watch commercial messages, they also understand better whose interests are being served by programming decisions.

Most of the television Canadians watch is commercial, paid for entirely by advertising revenue. One exception is CBC TV, which is funded by a combination of advertising revenue and government funds. In the United States, the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) is funded by government funds, private foundations, and corporate sponsorship. Community cable stations in Canada are funded by cable companies through fees they collect from subscribers.

Who decides what gets on TV?

Money is a big factor in deciding what gets on television, and if the business of TV is to deliver the largest number of viewers to advertisers, networks must schedule programs that attract viewers. Viewers become audiences or "markets," and sponsors or advertisers pay networks for providing access to those "markets."

Television networks create or buy programs they think will attract audiences. Sometimes independent producers create a program for artistic, educational, or other reasons and then sell it to the networks by explaining the kind of audience it will attract. Sometimes a network will create a program to attract viewers away from a competitor, but in all cases, networks conduct extensive audience or market research before deciding to show a program or series. Optional Workshop 5 has more information on the commercial nature of television.

Why don't we just get rid of TV?

It can be tempting for some parents, once they start to take TV seriously, to want to protect their children and simply get rid of TV. This is an understandable reaction and hundreds have done it for one reason or another, to varying degrees of success.

The decision to live without TV is personal and can be considered a radical but plausible choice, especially when children are very young. However, considering the fact that almost all Canadian homes have at least one TV, getting rid of it should not be seen as an alternative to teaching children how to deal with TV. Sooner or later, most children will be exposed to TV and will have to learn to deal with it even if they do not have it at home.

What can be done about TV and its influence?

Parents and other caring adults can take the following steps to ensure that television has a positive influence on children's thinking and learning. Learning these steps is the purpose of ThinkTV.

Observe what children watch and how they respond
Participants in ThinkTV workshops will learn how to observe television's influence on the thinking and learning of each member of their family. They will learn how to check their own assumptions and challenge the assumptions of others. They will also be able to make decisions about using television based on their own experience and the experience of others.

Manage what children watch, how much they watch, and how they watch
Participants will learn how to set goals for learning and understand how television can serve or interfere with those goals. They will keep informed about the full range of programs available, learn how to balance television viewing with other activities, and know how to negotiate an appropriate place for television in the life of each family member. Parents who manage their children's television help their children learn how to become selective viewers.

Mediate children's experience with television
This is the essence of critical media literacy. By watching and discussing programs with their children, parents can help their children make sense of television.

Workshop Outline

Purpose:

1. Find out what participants think about TV's influence on children's thinking and learning.
2. Find out participants' questions about TV.
3. Preview the rest of the ThinkTV workshops.
4. Discuss why it is important to get serious about TV.
5. Begin to track children's viewing habits.

Before you start:

- Read Background Reading.
- Photocopy handouts for this workshop.
- Try all the activities yourself.

You will need:

- Overhead projector or photocopies of the overheads for all participants
- Chalkboard and chalk or flip chart, markers, and tape for putting up flip chart pages

Overheads:

1.1 – Purposes of ThinkTV
1.2 – Purposes of Workshop 1
1.3 – ThinkTV Preview

Handouts:

1.1 – Love/Bug List
1.2 – What's Good/Bad about Children Watching TV?
1.3 – Questions Parents Ask about TV
1.4 – Home TV Survey
1.5 – Viewing Log
1.6 – Guidelines for Observing TV's Influence on Children
1.7 – Evaluation

Video:

TV Tango

Total time required: 2 hours

Agenda

Activity	Activity Name	Time Required	Material Required
1	Introduction	15 min	Overhead 1.1 – Purposes of Think TV Overhead 1.2 – Purposes of Workshop 1 Overhead 1.3 – Think TV Preview
2	TV Tango ... Love/Bug List	20 min	Video – *TV Tango* Handout 1.1 – Love/Bug List Handout 1.2 – What's Good/Bad about Children Watching TV
3	The Captivating Stranger	30 min	Handout 1.3 – Questions Parents Ask about TV
	BREAK	10 min	
4	Finding Everyday Information	35 min	Handout 1.4 – Home TV Survey Handout 1.5 – Viewing Log Handout 1.6 – Guidelines for Observing TV's Influence on Children
5	Closing and preview of next workshop	10 min	Handout 1.7 – Evaluation Form

ACTIVITY 1 • *Introduction*

Purpose:
Introduce the facilitator, participants, and agenda

Time required: 15 minutes

Materials required:
Overhead 1.1 – Purposes of ThinkTV
Overhead 1.2 – Purposes of ThinkTV Workshop 1
Overhead 1.3 – ThinkTV Preview

Directions:

1. Welcome participants. Acknowledge their commitment to their children and their own learning, which is shown by their participation in this workshop
2. Briefly introduce yourself and the purpose of the workshop series and this workshop using Overheads 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3.

You may want to post the purposes of the workshop series and the series preview in the room so participants can refer to them, or make photocopies for each participant.

3. Ask participants to introduce themselves, telling the gender and age of their children.
4. Present the agenda and the time frame for the workshop.

ACTIVITY 2 • *TV Tango ... Love/Bug List*

Purpose:

- Warm up the group and learn something about one another.
- Become comfortable with the idea that people have different feelings about television.
- Discover some of the programs that participants and their children watch and their attitudes toward them.

Time required: 20 minutes

Materials required:

Handout 1.1 – Love/Bug List

Handout 1.2 – What's Good/Bad about Children Watching TV?

Video: *TV Tango*

Directions:

1. *This is a warm-up activity and discussion starter. It should be fun, and the facilitator should participate by contributing to the list.*

   Introduce the activity by acknowledging that people have strong feelings about TV programs – some positive and some negative. Explain that workshops about television spend a lot of time discussing the problems of television, but most people enjoy some things on television, whether they want to admit it or not.

2. View *TV Tango* together and discuss people's reactions.

3. Make two columns on a flip chart or blackboard. Label one "Love" and the other "Bug." Ask participants to call out names of programs. On the "Love" side, list programs that they like to watch. On the "Bug" side, list the programs they don't like.

   There is no "correct" list to come out of this exercise. Facilitator and participants should enjoy and accept some of the contradictions that may emerge.

   The same program may appear on both sides of the chart. If this occurs, use it as an opportunity to point out that everyone has different views when it comes to programs. For example, some parents may find "The Simpsons" funny and satirical, while others may find it offensive. One parent may make a point of watching hockey games, and another may avoid them.

4. When the columns are full and everyone has made a contribution, briefly discuss the results and the reasons behind people's selections for each column.

   Don't work too hard to get reasons for the programs people put on the lists. Not everyone will give a reason. Even when asked, many people may not be able to explain their reasons. The ability to reflect on and talk about television is a skill that will be developed throughout this workshop series. Look for opportunities to point out that TV, and people's relationship to it, can be different, complex, and worth taking some time to think about.

5. Distribute Handout 1.1, Love/Bug List. Invite parents to make their own notes in the space provided. These could be insights, contradictions, questions, or ideas they want to remember.

6. Save the flip chart lists generated by this exercise for future reference. If you need to erase the blackboard, ask someone to write down the lists for you on a piece of paper.

7. Distribute Handout 1.2, What's Good/Bad about Children Watching TV?, as optional reading.

ACTIVITY 3 • *The Captivating Stranger*

Purpose:

- Assess parents' concerns about the effects of television on their children.
- Generate the questions that will help determine the direction and priorities for the remainder of the workshop series.
- Introduce parents to a different way of thinking about how they use television with their children.

Time required: 30 minutes

Materials required:
Handout 1.3 – Questions Parents Ask about TV

Directions:

1. Present the following scenario as dramatically and vividly as you can. (You may want to ask people to close their eyes so they can imagine it better.)

   It's dinner time. You're late starting supper. The kids are in the house and driving you crazy. A well-dressed, respectable-looking person rings the doorbell. This person has a very large, expensive-looking suitcase. They ask to come in and play with your children. The kids pester you to let them in. What do you do?

   Write the responses on the flip chart or chalkboard. You can provide the following options:

   OPTION 1 • Take the stranger and the kids to the living room, close the door with relief and go back to making supper?

   OPTION 2 • Try to find out more about the stranger before you let this person play with your kids?

   OPTION 3 • Send the stranger away?

   OPTION 4 • Call the police?

2. Discuss the responses. Most parents reject Option 1. Many choose Option 2, and some Option 3 or 4.

   Make sure that everyone understands that the stranger is a symbol for television. Explain that television is like a stranger we let into our house. If we think of TV as a stranger who we let play with our kids, we might treat it differently.

   Most people will admit to using television as in Option 1. They are only too happy to let TV distract their children. Explain that because TV is regarded as part of the environment, most of us don't realize that there are ways of dealing with it besides Option 1. But when we think of turning our children over to a complete stranger, most of us would ask some questions first as in Option 2. The purpose of this exercise is to figure out what questions to ask about television and how to get some answers.

3. Return to the scenario. Ask participants to explore Option 2.

   What kinds of questions would they ask the stranger? What kinds of questions would they ask themselves? List these questions on a flip chart or chalkboard.

   Most parents will have many questions to ask. But if you have to stimulate the questions, here are some that other parents have asked:
   - Why do you want to play with my kids?
   - What are your credentials?
   - Who do you work for?
   - What kind of games/activities are you going to play?
   - What's in the suitcase?
   - What are you selling?
   - What is your experience working with kids?
   - What good will it do my kids?
   - How much of my child's time will you take?
   - What are your values, background, religion?
   - How will this affect the rest of our lives?

4. When you have a list of questions, go back over them, group similar questions, and rephrase them as questions about television.

For example: You may have three similar questions: "Where do you get your money?" "Who do you work for?" and "Who pays you?" You can rephrase these to read "How does television make money?" or "Who pays for television?"

   Ask if there are any questions or concerns about television that are not on the list. Include them.

5. Ask if anyone would have chosen Option 3 or 4. Explore how Option 3 could be acted out in relation to TV. If anyone chooses Option 4, ask what crime they would charge the stranger with?

6. Distribute Handout 1.3 – Questions Parents Ask about TV. Ask participants to write down the list of questions they've just made. Explain that they may have questions related to their own children and there is a place for writing those in.

7. Look at Handout 1.3. Read it aloud. Explain that these are questions many other parents have asked. Compare these questions to the questions the group asked. Discuss the similarities and differences.

   Explain that parents are doing a very important thing for children by figuring out the answers to these questions. It is the first step to planning what to do about television.

   Explain that the answers to these questions will be developed during the next workshops in the ThinkTV series. The next activity will begin this process.

ACTIVITY 4 • *Finding Everyday Information*

Purpose:

- Provide a method of gathering information about how families use television.

- Start the process of answering our questions about television by presenting tools to observe when children watch TV and how they use it.

Time required: 35 minutes

Materials required:

Handout 1.4 – Home TV Survey
Handout 1.5 – Viewing Log
Handout 1.6 – Guidelines for Observing TV's Influence on Children

Directions:

1. Ask if any parent in the group has experience with discovering a food allergy. Ask if their doctor asked them to write down everything their child ate. If no one offers an experience, explain that when people are trying to find out about what food their kids are allergic to, their doctor will ask them to write down everything their child eats for a few weeks.

2. Before we can understand how our children are being affected by television, we need to know what kind of shows they are watching and how much. Explain that the Home TV Survey and the Viewing Log are tools for gathering information. Participants can use this information to answer some of the questions asked in the last activity. Parents will be researching their own children's viewing habits – what they watch, how it affects them, and how much time they spend with TV.

3. Give participants Handout 1.4, Home TV Survey. Read it aloud and ask them to complete it now and bring it to the next workshop. Try to get an idea of the group television profile by asking for a show of hands to each question. For example: How many people have more than one TV? How many people have cable?

4. Give out Handout 1.5, Viewing Log, and read through it to make sure everyone understands how to complete it. Ask parents to complete it for the next session. Explain that this exercise requires quite a commitment for this week, but that it is the only way to get the information needed to understand how their children use television.

   If some participants will have problems completing the viewing log this week, arrange for them to do it another week or for a shorter period of time. Let participants know that Handout 1.4, Home TV Survey, and Handout 1.5, Viewing Log, will not be passed in. These activities are for their information and will be used for discussion within the group.

5. Give out Handout 1.6, Guidelines for Observing TV's Influence on Children. Read through it and ensure that everyone understands how to complete it. Ask participants to complete it for the next workshop. Ask if there are other questions they would like to add to Handout 1.6.

ACTIVITY 5 • *Closing and Preview of Next Workshop*

Purpose:

- Have each participant review the question that is foremost in his/her mind.
- Evaluate the workshop.
- Close the workshop.

Time required: 10 minutes

Materials required:
Handout 1.7 – Evaluation Form

Directions:

1. Acknowledge parents' commitment to their children and congratulate them for taking the first step toward taking charge of television in their homes. Learning to ask questions and gather information is necessary before they can be in charge of TV's influence on their children.

2. Ask each person to state one thing they will ask themselves the next time they turn on the TV.

3. Give out the Evaluation Form, and ask participants to complete it now and hand it in.

4. Give the time, date, location, and topic of the next workshop.

5. Remind participants to complete Handouts 1.4, 1.5, and 1.6 and bring them to the next workshop.

Ideas for Adapting This Workshop

For Participants Who Aren't Parents

When adapting this workshop for participants who aren't parents, keep in mind that the purpose of Workshop 1 is to explore people's assumptions about television's influence on thinking and learning. This is the assessment phase to find out what they already know about television and what issues they are most interested in. The activities are aimed at stimulating learners' questions about television and inspiring them to take it seriously as an influence on their thinking and learning, the future generation, and society as a whole.

You can change the Captivating Stranger scenario to leave out the references to children. The questions can focus on what the learner would need to know about a stranger before letting one into the house.

Encourage participants who aren't parents to conduct the Home TV Survey and ask them to keep a Viewing Log on children they know such as siblings, nieces, nephews, grandchildren, and neighbours. They can also make themselves or another member of their household the subject of these surveys. It is important that learners keep their research specific and not based on some theoretical judgments about other people's children.

Several activities described are suitable for groups in which the concerns are not primarily those of parents.

For Participants with Limited Print Literacy Skills or Participants with Disabilities

Participants with limited print literacy skills and those with disabilities should have opportunities near the beginning of this workshop to explore the positive role television plays in their lives. The Captivating Stranger exercise could be adapted to ask questions such questions as, What would my life be like if I couldn't use television? What do I know about television that my children don't?

People in this group can explore how their understanding of television relates to reading skills. For example, What do I know from watching television that I could use when learning to read? What do I miss on television because I can't read what's on the screen? When working with adults with limited print skills, you will need to take extra time to help them read and complete the handouts.

Changing Sequence

You could condense Workshop 1 for groups of parents who are already serious about television and impatient to learn what they can do about it. Participants will need to complete Handouts 1.4, 1.5, and 1.6 in Activity 4, Finding Everyday Information, before beginning Workshop 2. They should also have a preview of other ThinkTV workshops.

Other Activities

ThinkTV Journal

Ask participants to keep a journal of their thoughts and ideas about television in the same binder or notebook as the workshop handouts. It could include their assignments such as the viewing log and accounts of viewing experiences at home, comments about specific programs, lists of programs they would like to watch, and reviews from magazines or newspapers about certain programs. They may want to keep track of any changes in their feelings toward TV or how they use it. The journal could also be very personal and include stories, drawings, poems, clippings, photos, or ideas for TV programs that they would like to see made. Give participants an opportunity to share things from their journal in each workshop.

Personal TV Dictionary

Ask participants to write down in their notebook or section of their ThinkTV journal all the words they hear on television or about television that they don't understand. Have them write down the meaning when they find it either through a workshop, explanation by another person, or research.

TV Clipping File

Start a group file of newspaper or magazine articles about television. Clippings could be about a TV program, actor, or controversy such as a new channel or increases in cable rates. The file could also include ads for television sets or TV-related products. If participants see something on television that could be included in the clippings file, ask them to write a brief description and bring it to class.

Some clippings could be displayed on a bulletin board. Have a different team of participants make the selections and prepare the display each week. Ask them to discuss the reasons for their selections and use this as an opportunity for them to understand that the selection process involved in the television they see. Participants should be encouraged to be creative when preparing the display, which could also include selections from ThinkTV journals, if participants are comfortable with that.

Write TV

Have participants write a short essay about some aspect of television's influence on children's thinking and learning.

Have participants write a synopsis of their favourite television program, including character sketches of the main characters.

Talk about TV

Have the group discuss the statement, "Television takes our children around the world before most parents let them cross the street."

Have the group discuss the statement, "Television is not the good guy; it's not the bad guy either. It's just a box. It's how you use it that matters."

Reality Check

Ask participants to make assumptions about their child's teacher's attitude toward television and its influence on thinking and learning. Then have them develop some questions that they can ask the teacher to find out what she or he really thinks about TV. These questions could be asked in a personal interview with the teacher or in a letter. Discuss the results in class.

Have participants explore their assumptions about your (workshop facilitator's) attitude to television and its influence on children's thinking and learning. Accept their assumptions, asking them to explain what they base their assumptions on. Ask them to observe if their assumptions change over the course of the workshop series.

Have each member of the group choose a question from the list generated in the Captivating Stranger activity. Ask them to try to answer the question using resources available in the community. These resources can include libraries, resource people, businesses, and computer services. Discuss the process they used to try to find answers to those questions and apply the critical thinking process to their findings.

HANDOUT 1.1 • *Love/Bug List*

Use this space to make notes about the Love/Bug exercise. You can write your ideas, other people's ideas, questions you want to ask, or a program you want to watch. You may not agree with all the statements below.

There are good things and bad things on TV.

People have strong feelings about television.

Parents have different ideas about what is good and bad about TV.

TV affects different children in different ways.

Parents are the best judge of what is good for their own children.

HANDOUT 1.2 • *What's Good/Bad about Children Watching TV?*

What's "good" about children watching TV?

- Children can learn academically and socially from television.
- They learn reading and counting skills.
- They begin to see that learning can be fun by experiencing creative play.
- They experience the social interaction and relationships of characters in a series.
- Entertainment and learning are intertwined through story telling, role playing, and music.
- Older children learn about the world around them from television.
- They can learn academically – science, math, geography, history, politics, and literature.
- They can learn socially by identifying with positive role models.
- They can learn creatively through programs about hobbies, skills, and interests.
- They learn that television can be a source of information as well as a form of entertainment.

What's "bad" about children watching TV?

- Young children cannot distinguish fact from fiction. Scary characters are very real, and dangerous physical feats often appear easy.
- Children see behaviour that is often violent and socially offensive.
- They may imitate attitudes and behaviours that are not representative of their parents' values.
- They may believe everything they see and hear on television to be true.
- Too much television viewing may prevent children from taking part in play, sports, reading, and interacting with friends and family.

HANDOUT 1.3 • *Questions Parents Ask about TV*

These are common questions parents ask about TV. Are they like your questions? Use the space to write down your thoughts about these questions. You might have questions about the questions.

How does TV influence children, thinking, and learning?

Who pays for TV?

Who decides what gets on TV?

How do they decide what gets on TV?

How much time should TV take up?

Why don't we just get rid of TV?

What can parents do about the influence of TV?

HANDOUT 1.4 • *Home TV Survey*

Please complete this survey now.

1. List the first names, gender, and ages of the children living in your household.

   ____

2. How many working televisions are in your home? __________
3. Where are they located? Circle the room(s):

   living room dining room kitchen family room parents' bedroom child's bedroom other

4. Do you have a VCR? __________
5. Do you subscribe to cable TV? __________ Satellite service? __________
6. How many channels do you receive? __________
7. Is there a video game system in your home (i.e., Nintendo, Sega, etc.)? __________
8. Is there a computer in your home? __________
9. Is the computer connected to the Internet? __________
10. How do you find out what is on TV? Circle any that apply:

    newspaper listing *TV Guide* on-screen listing looking at each channel

11. Do your children do homework with TV on? __________ How often? ______________________
12. Does your family eat a meal with TV on? __________ How often? ______________________
13. Which channels do your children watch most often? ________________

Viewing Prediction

Answer these questions now. Save them for next week and compare your answers to what you learn from the Viewing Log.

1. How much TV do you think your children watch every day? ________________
2. How much TV do you think your children watch every week? ________________
3. What are your children's favourite programs? ______________________________

HANDOUT 1.5 • *Viewing Log*

Write down what your children watch and when they watch. Try to do this every day for one week.

DAY	TIME	PROGRAM (TV or video?)	WHO WATCHED

TOTAL TIME ____________

DAY	TIME	PROGRAM (TV or video?)	WHO WATCHED

TOTAL TIME ____________

HANDOUT 1.6 • *Guidelines for Observing TV's Influence on Children*

Pretend you just got your first TV. Before you decide to keep it, you want to know how it affects your children's daily life. Observe your children watching television and ask yourself the following questions. Use the space to make notes. This will be discussed in the next workshop.

1. What does my child do besides watch TV? What do I think of the balance between other activities and TV?

2. Does my child watch shows or videos that are meant for older children or adults? Please name some.

3. Does my child pressure me for things that are advertised on TV? For example: food, toys, clothes?

4. Does my child act or talk like the characters she or he sees on TV? Please name some.

5. What does my child learn from TV?

6. What does my child enjoy about television?

7. What does my child look like when she or he watches TV?

8. Does my child's mood change after watching TV? Please describe

9. Does my child talk about what she or he sees on TV?

10. Does my child watch TV alone, with friends, or with other family members?

HANDOUT 1.7 • *Evaluation*

1. Please state one surprising thing you learned in this workshop.

2. Did you find this workshop useful?

3. Will you come to the next workshop?

4. Is there anything that could be done to improve this workshop?

Resources

Facilitators' Reference

Big World, Small Screen: The Role of Television in American Society, Huston, Donnerstein, Fairchild, Feschbach, Katz, Murray, Rubenstein, Wilcox, and Zuckerman, University of Nebraska Press, 1992

* *Mass Media as Community Educators*, Stephen D. Brookfield, New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 1990

Media Literacy, An Educational Basic for the Information Age, Carlos E. Cortés, Education and Urban Society, 1992

Screen Smarts: A Family Guide to Media Literacy, Gloria DeGaetano and Kathleen Bander, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996
Chapter 1, As Children Grow: Screen Influence, addresses many of the issues raised in *ThinkTV* Workshop 1.

"Teaching Critical Thinking: Eight Easy Ways to Fail Before You Begin," Robert J. Sternberg, *Phi Delta Kappan*, 1987

Teleliteracy: Taking Television Seriously, David Bianculli, The Continuum Publishing Company, 1992

"Teletrance" [article, 3pp], Dr. Thomas Wear, *Adbusters: Journal of the Mental Environment*, Winter 1995

* Indicates that the resource is included in the ThinkTV Resources collection at each Literacy Resource Centre. (See Where to Find Resources.)

** Indicates that the resource is included only at the Nova Scotia Department of Education, Metro Region Literacy Resource Centre. (See Where to Find Resources.)

* *Television Violence: A Review of the Effects on Children of Different Ages*, Wendy Josephson, National Clearinghouse on Family Violence, 1995

** *The Wired Bedroom*, Office of the County Superintendent of Schools, Santa Barbara County, CA. May 1989

"The Zen TV Experiment," Bernard McGrane, *Adbusters: Journal of the Mental Environment*, Summer 1993

Suggested for Use with Participants

Parenting in the TV Age: A Media Literacy Workshop Kit on Children and Television, Center for Media and Values, 1991

* *Prime Time Parent* [workshop kit with videos], Alliance for Children and Television and Health Canada, 1995
This kit includes background information, handouts, training manual, video clips and a training video designed to help parents cope with TV at home.

* *TV Tango* [video 4:00], no. 3 on *Rights of the Hearts*, National Film Board of Canada, 1994
A delightful short, animated film illustrates one of the United Nation's Rights of the Child – children have a right to wholesome, creative play. This video is a useful discussion started for looking at the role TV plays in inspiring children's play, both positively and negatively. Can also be used with children ages 5 to 8.

Television and Human Behaviour [video 25:00], McIntyre Media, 1991
Video provides a good stimulus for discussion about television and the need for critical media literacy. It summarizes concerns, raises questions, and uses good visual illustrations of the concepts discussed.

* *The Impact of Television* [video: 20:00], Visual Education Centre, 1980.

The Smart Parent's Guide to Kid's TV, Milton Chen, KQED Books, 1994
Part II: The Stranger in the House: What TV Teaches Our Kids addresses many of the issues raised in ThinkTV Workshop 1.

Use Television to Your Child's Advantage, Singer, Singer and Zukerman, Acropolis Books Ltd. 1990

"Virtual Unreality: Television, families and communities in the nineties," Alan Mirabelli, *Transition*, March 1995, Vanier Institute of the Family.

Watch What Your Children Watch, Cable Television Association of Nova Scotia, 1995

Suggested For Use with Participants' Children

The Adventures of Christina Valentine (audiocassette tape), Children's Television Resource and Education Centre, San Francisco: 1991

Internet Sites

School of Family Studies and Human Services, Kansas State University
http:www.ksu.edu/humec/tele.htm.
Site includes useful articles and resources about children and television by well-respected researchers.

Think TV:

A Guide to
Managing TV
in the Home

Purposes of Think TV

Learn how television influences thinking and learning.

Learn how to use television to support thinking and learning especially in children.

Think TV:

A Guide to

Managing TV

in the Home

Purposes of Workshop 1

Find out what you think about TV's influence on children, thinking, and learning.

Find out your questions about TV.

Preview the rest of the ThinkTV workshops.

Discuss why it is important to get serious about TV.

Think TV:

A Guide to
Managing TV
in the Home

ThinkTV Preview

Core Workshops • Managing Television at Home

Workshop 1: Getting Serious about Television

Workshop 2: Putting TV in Its Place

Workshop 3: Using TV to Support School Success

Optional Workshops • Reading TV — The Basics

Workshop 4: The Language of TV

Workshop 5: The Language of Advertising

WORKSHOP 2

Putting TV in Its Place

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Overheads

Overview

Workshop 2 will focus on understanding and managing the way learners and their families use television in the home. The workshop will help participants find a good place for television in their homes and in their families. The workshop is also about intentionally putting television in its place and keeping it there so television can better serve the entertainment and learning needs of all family members, especially children. Participants will use the information they gathered in the Home TV Survey and the Viewing Log (Workshop 1) to analyse how much television their children watch and the kinds of programs they watch now. Based on this analysis, they will decide what changes, if any, they want to make in their family's viewing habits. Each participant will make a plan for managing the way TV is used in their home.

Outcomes

- Participants will explore ideas about managing TV in the home and family.
- They will explore how much time people spend watching TV and the kinds of programs they watch.
- Each participant will develop a plan to put TV in its place.

Workshop 2 will reinforce the following:

Critical Thinking Links		Media Literacy Links	Critical Viewing Strategies
Four Main Components of Critical Thinking Process	Five Common Phases of Critical Thinking	Key Concepts about Media Literacy	
Questioning assumptions	Trigger event	Television is serious business	✓ Reality check
Detecting bias	✓ Appraisal	All television messages are made up	Talk about TV
Analysing context	✓ Exploration	Television uses special techniques to get ideas across and make viewers react a certain way	✓ Find questions
Seeking alternatives	✓ Finding alternatives	Viewers affect the meaning of television messages	Watch TV
	Integration	Television affects the way we see our own lives and the rest of the world	
		✓ Television must be managed in the home	

Background Reading

In order to help parents understand the role television plays in their families' lives, they should consider how much time is spent watching TV, where the television is located, and what programs their children like to watch.

What research says about teaching children to use TV wisely

Several studies show that children who are heavy television viewers frequently perform poorly at school and are less involved in other recreational and learning activities. The studies do not show conclusively that watching television causes them to do poorly or that they watch so much television because they do poorly at school and in other activities. In any case, most experts concerned with the healthy development of children feel that it is important to set some limits on the amount of time children spend watching TV as well as on program content.

Television's place in the home

In order to help parents analyse the role television plays in their families' lives, they should consider how much time is spent watching TV, where the television is located, and what programs their children like to watch.

How much television should children watch?

Parents often want a simple prescription for how much TV their children should watch. Some experts have recommended maximum times of as little as two hours per week for children ages 3 – 6 and five hours per week for ages 6+, but without considering a wide range of other factors, these recommendations are meaningless and, in most cases, unrealistic.

Most child development experts agree that limits should be placed on how much television children watch. Children who watch four hours or more of television a day are considered to be heavy viewers, while those who watch an hour or less are considered to be light viewers. Studies indicate that heavy viewers put less effort into schoolwork, spend less time playing with friends, and are less involved in recreational activities and hobbies. While there is no hard and fast rule for the amount of time children spend watching TV, researchers suggest one hour a day for preschoolers and a maximum of two hours per day for elementary school children.

Researchers indicate the television should be balanced with other daily activities to promote healthy development. Children should not be so involved in television viewing that TV characters become more important than their friends, programs replace play activity, and schoolwork begins to slide.

Where to put the TV

The location of the television in the home is an important factor in managing it, but opinions vary on the ideal location. Some experts suggest the TV should be in a busy area of the house so parents can monitor what is on and when. Others recommend putting the TV in an out-of-the-way area where children are not tempted to watch. Parents will have to make their own decisions based on the ages of their children, other family considerations, and the layout of their house.

Most researchers agree that a child's bedroom is not an appropriate place for television because parents cannot monitor when their children are watching, especially at night, or know the content of the programs are viewing. *The Wired Bedroom*, a study conducted in Santa Barbara, California, found that students' school performance and the placement of a television in their room were directly connected. In 1989, they found that 43.6 percent of the total k–12 population had a TV in the bedroom. The better students did in school, the less likely they were to have a television in their bedroom. Students who said they could do better at school were more likely to have a TV in their bedrooms.

What do children watch?

It is up to parents to decide what their children watch on television. One way to do this is to watch at least one episode of programs their children regularly watch to determine their appropriateness by examining the characters, issues, and themes that are presented. Parents can ask themselves what message is being delivered in this program. This will make it easier for them to select programs that are suitable in content, child-centred, and informative as well as entertaining.

Parents should limit children's exposure to programs that are violent, scary, sexist, racist, or offensive. This type of programming does not encourage positive feelings of self-worth and may in fact lead to feelings of anger and envy, while promoting narrow stereotyping of others and the world in general.

Some ideas for helping children use TV wisely

Activities in Workshop 2 will focus on the kinds of programs children watch and the amount of time children spend watching television and in other activities. These are important first steps in preparing participants to become critical viewers. Developing how they watch involves using television to stimulate thinking and support active learning and healthy development.

1. Get involved with what they watch

Place the TV where parents can monitor what children are watching and when.

If the television is in a busy part of the house, parents can also decide when it goes off and on. Parents should also try to keep the television covered when it is not in use or on a wheeled cart so it can be moved around or put away when no one is watching. One family keeps the TV in a closet, and sometimes the children get so involved with other things – games, old clothes, sports equipment – that they forget about the television in the closet.

Watch what they are watching.

When possible, parents should watch with children and practise active viewing skills to be discussed in remaining ThinkTV workshops. Parents should watch at least one episode of most programs children watch regularly to understand the characters, issues, and themes. Using newspaper listings and reviews, parents can find out about programs and episodes they can't see and discuss them with their children.

Decide what they can watch.

Parents should carefully select the programs their children watch – especially those for young children. If parents think a program is too violent or scary or racist, sexist, or offensive, they should limit their children's exposure to that kind of television.

As children grow older and spend less time at home, limiting their exposure to offensive television programs becomes harder. Parents of older children may have to work harder to discover what their children are watching. They may have to ask more questions, discuss more, and explain more. Older children can gradually become more involved in decisions about what they watch, but they still need help to make sense of what they see on television.

2. Set limits on how much TV they watch and when.

If there is no reason to have the TV on, leave it off.
Young children can usually entertain themselves quite happily without television. If older children want to watch, they can ask. For background sound, parents can use the radio or stereo.

Plan ahead.
Parents can use television listings in local newspapers to plan family viewing and include their children in the process. They can check for specials and programs that relate to their children's interests, hobbies, or schoolwork and also plan a variety of programs to watch. Parents should encourage children to balance their viewing to include arts, music, news, and educational programs, as well as sitcoms and other entertainment. They should include public television programs as well as commercial, local programs, and Canadian, as well as American, programs.

Plan family viewing times when the whole family can watch a program together.
Parents should plan to watch a special that everyone enjoys or a program the parent wants to find out more about. They should include time to discuss the program afterwards as a family and find some background information about the program from the newspaper or magazines to add to the discussion.

Balance TV with other activities.
Parents can make a list of things that need to be done each day, (e.g., homework, reading, music/sport practice, exercise, household chores, pet care, and personal grooming.) They can refer to this list when deciding television's place in the family's daily life.

Parents can also keep a list of things to do that don't involve television, such as reading, listening to music, playing games, going to the library, going to a park or playground, making crafts or art projects, or playing outdoors. They can use the newspaper and community notice boards to find out about inexpensive community activities that might interest their family and refer to this list when deciding what to watch and when.

Another thing parents can do is keep a list of things their children say they don't have enough time to do, (e.g., tidy their room, sort their stamp collection, finish a craft project, rake the leaves, or write a letter to their grandparents.) They can refer to this list when their children say, "I'm bored, there's nothing to do. Can I watch TV?"

Give children a TV allowance.
Parents can decide how much time they think each child should spend watching television in a week. Involve older children in the decision. Parents can give children tokens representing blocks of time or programs for the week. For example, if the child is going to be allowed to watch seven hours per week, the parents give him/her 14 tokens representing 30 minutes each. Tokens can be made out of poker chips, marbles, checkers, buttons, corks, clothes pins, or cardboard. Some families make TV tickets, like theatre tickets. Each child should have a different coloured token. Children then "cash in" their tokens or tickets for viewing time.

Tokens for time allotments give older children more flexibility in choosing programs. For young children who cannot read or tell time, tokens or tickets should relate to specific programs rather than time amounts to allow parents better control over what children see. Many programs on television are not appropriate for young children; therefore parents should choose the programs.

Teach children the difference between watching a program and watching TV.

Deciding to watch a specific program is a purposeful activity. However, if viewers just watch television regardless of program content, they might as well be watching a blank screen. In one family, when children ask to watch television, rather than a specific program, the mother responds, "Sure, just don't turn it on..." The absurd image of watching a blank screen reinforces the idea that the content of the program is an important part of watching television.

If children have some free time to watch television, parents can encourage them to check the listings and select a program before turning it on. When the program is over, they can turn the television off.

Use the VCR.

If they have a VCR, parents can tape the program and view it later rather than interrupt creative play or other activities to watch a favourite TV program. One mother of preschoolers finds they can entertain themselves quite happily during the morning, when many of the good preschool programs are on. Rather than interrupt their creative play, she tapes the morning programs and plays them back at quiet time or meal preparation time, when the children are too tired to entertain themselves and she is busy.

Older children may miss their favourite program because it is on at dinnertime, after their bedtime, or when they are involved in other activities. In these cases, the parent can tape it and let them see it at a better time. Parents can also tape educational programs or ones that relate to hobbies, interests, or schoolwork and play them back at times when they would like the children to view something other than regularly scheduled programs such as Saturday morning cartoons or evening situation comedies.

Many families develop a collection of videos they can show their children when "nothing else is on," but it is a good time to watch television. Also, many public libraries loan videos at no cost. They usually have a good collection of children's videos. Careful use of videotapes and the VCR can give parents much better control over what their children see.

Make some TV-free times.

Mornings before school, meal times, homework time, and chore time can be happier and more productive without television. Some families choose school nights or a weekend afternoon to go without television, and others make one day a week "TV-free." A growing number of families and schools set aside a week or two each year for a TV retreat when they don't watch any television. These times are not intended to suggest that television is a bad thing but to give viewers a time to reflect on TV, the place it has in their lives, how they use it, and changes they might want to make in how they use it.

3. Teach them how to watch

Link TV to other activities.

If a child shows interest in a program based on a book, the parent can first have them read the book. If a documentary inspires a child's interest in a subject such as volcanoes or dinosaurs, a parent can encourage them to find out more about them in books, videos, or other programs. Parents can also keep a map or an atlas near the television and mark the places that are mentioned in the news. They can encourage children to write fan letters to favourite actors and collect pictures and biographical information about them and help children make craft projects and science experiments they see on TV. Workshop 3 will have more ideas for linking television to other activities.

Parents can set a good example by managing their own viewing as well as their children's.
Children will learn to use television by watching how their parents use it. Parents can make their viewing and their children's intentional, not habitual.

4. Don't Panic

Parents who are participating in this workshop and who want to make changes in their families viewing habits should proceed slowly. Television habits like any others are hard to break. Parents should discuss changes they want to make (one at a time) with their families beforehand. It will be a trial and error process. Some things will work and some won't. Nevertheless, parents should feel that they are learning to manage television in their homes and evaluating its significance in their families' lives. They also need to remember that there is nothing wrong with watching a program to relax, unwind, and be thoroughly entertained.

Just as parents know their children better than anyone else, they are also the best judges of suitable programming for their children. They need to know that "good" TV programs do not have to be instructional to be of value. Rather, good programming presents information in an entertaining manner that captures children's interest, promotes positive feelings, and encourages them to learn more about the world and their place in it.

Workshop Outline

Purpose:

1. Explore ideas about managing TV in the home and family.
2. Explore issues about how much time people spend watching TV and the kind of programs they watch.
3. Develop a plan for each participant to put TV in its place.

Before you start:

- Read Background Reading.
- Photocopy handouts for this workshop.
- Try all the activities yourself.

You will need:

- Overhead projector or photocopies of the overheads for all participants
- Chalkboard and chalk or flip chart; markers, and tape for putting up flip chart pages
- TV listings, enough for each participant
- Crayons, markers, or coloured pencils, enough for six colours for each participant

Overhead:

Purposes of Workshop 2

Handouts:

2.1 Tips for Parents on How to Balance TV in the Home (Optional)
2.2 TV's Place in Your Child's Day
2.3 Categories of Programs
2.4 Program Category Descriptions
2.5 Viewing Plan
2.6 Some Facts about TV's Place in the Family
2.7 Check List – Putting TV in Its Place
2.8 Evaluation Form

Video:

Shockwaves: Television in America, Marlin Motion Pictures, 1984. 32 minutes. (Counter 00-0400)

The following assignments completed by each participant from Workshop 1:
Handout 1.4 – Home TV Survey
Handout 1.5 – Viewing Log
Handout 1.6 – Guidelines for Observing TV's Influence on Children

Total time required: two hours

Agenda

Activity	Activity Name	Time Required	Material Required
1	Introduction	10 min	Overhead 1.1 – Purposes of Workshop 2
2	Warm-up — Viewer from Another Planet	15 min	
3	The Unruly Houseguest	20 min	Video *Shockwaves: Television in America*
4	Guidelines for TV's Place at Home	30 min	Handout 1.4 – Home TV Survey (completed) Handout 1.5 – Viewing Log (completed) Handout 1.6 – Guidelines for Observing TV's Influence on Children (completed) Handout 2.1 – Tips for Parents on How to Balance TV in the Home (optional) Handout 2.2 – TV's Place in Your Child's Day
	BREAK	10 min	
5	Make a Viewing Plan	25 min	Handout 2.3 – Categories of Programs Handout 2.4 – Program Category Descriptions Handout 2.5 – Viewing Plan Handout 2.6 – Some Facts About TV's Place in the Family TV listings
6	Closing and preview of next workshop	10 min	Handout 2.7 – Checklist: Putting TV in Its Place Handout 2.8 – Evaluation

ACTIVITY 1 • *Introduction*

Purpose:
Introduce Workshop 2

Time required: 10 minutes

Materials required:
Overhead 2.1 – Purposes of Workshop 2

Directions:

1. Welcome participants. Acknowledge their commitment to their children and their own learning by participating in this workshop

2. Briefly introduce yourself and the purpose of Workshop 2. Use Overhead 2.1, Purposes of Workshop 2. (If this is the first workshop with this group, introduce the purpose of the workshop series, using Overheads 1.1 and 1.3 from Workshop 1.)

You may want to post the purpose of the workshop series and the series preview in the room so participants can refer to them throughout the series. Or you may make photocopies for each participant.

3. Present the agenda and the time frame for the session.

ACTIVITY 2 • *Viewer From Another Planet*

Purpose:
Warm up the group and think about TV in a new way.

Time required: 15 minutes

Materials required: none

Directions:
Introduce participants to an imaginary person who is visiting the group. This visitor is from another planet and has never seen anything like television. This visitor has found a television in his or her hotel room and wants to know what he or she is supposed to do with it. Have each participant describe how he or she would answer the visitor.

If your group is large or if participants are hesitant to speak up in the group, have people work in pairs to come up with an answer to the visitor's question. Take a few minutes to have each pair report back to the group.

This is a warm-up exercise and should be quick and fun. Silly answers should be welcomed. This is a difficult question for many people to answer seriously. Most people have never thought about what television is for. The purpose of asking the question is not to find definitive answers but to give learners some critical distance to think about their own use of TV at home.

ACTIVITY 3 • *The Unruly Houseguest*

Purpose:
Explain the need for managing TV at home.

Time required: 20 minutes

Directions:

1. Play *Shockwaves: Television in America* video from counter 00–0400 and discuss.

2. Present the following scenario as dramatically and vividly as you can. (People may want to close their eyes so they can imagine it better.)

   Imagine that you have a guest in your house. It could be the captivating stranger we talked about last workshop. It could be someone you actually know.

   You don't know how long this person is going to stay, but you expect it may be for a long time. At first you enjoy the interesting, entertaining company even though you can't get a word in edgewise. This guest is loud, butts into conversations, and keeps talking, and distracting you from doing other important things around the house. You start to notice some changes in your children. The houseguest is telling them a lot of stories that you don't think they are old enough to hear.

   This houseguest has many ideas that are different than yours. Some are really interesting, but some are disturbing, especially about topics such as nutrition, violence, sex, and money. The children are treating you differently. They want to spend all their time with the houseguest. This guest is influencing your children. Some ways are positive, but many things are starting to worry you. What do you do?

   OPTION 1 • Tell the guest to pack up and get out?

   OPTION 2 • Don't say anything because you don't want to hurt the guest's feelings or ruin your children's fun relationship with him or her?

   OPTION 3 • Make some house rules for the guest and your family?

3. Discuss the options participants chose. Make sure that all participants understand that the houseguest is a symbol for television.

   Point out that Option 3 is the only effective option participants have for dealing with television. TV is everywhere and not likely to go away soon. Participants need to be able to put TV in its place. By attending this workshop, participants have shown that they want to make changes in how they use television. That is the purpose of the next activity.

ACTIVITY 4 • Guidelines for TV's Place at Home

Purpose:

- Analyse the information gathered in Handouts 1.4, 1.5, and 1.6 from Workshop 1 regarding how television is used in participants' homes.
- Set some goals for using television effectively.

Time required: 30 minutes

Materials required:

- Completed Handout 1.4 from Workshop 1, Home TV Survey
- Completed Handout 1.5 from Workshop 1, Viewing Log
- Completed Handout 1.6 from Workshop 1, Guidelines for Observing TV's Influence on Children
- Handout 2.1 – Tips for Parents on How to Balance TV in the Home (optional)
- Handout 2.2 – TV's Place in Your Child's Day
- Six different-coloured crayons, coloured pencils, or markers for each participant

Directions:

1. Give participants a few minutes to review the notes they made in Handouts 1.4, 1.5, and 1.6 from Workshop 1. You may want them to work in pairs to review and discuss their findings.

2. Explain that the purpose of this activity is to help participants set some guidelines for how to use television in their homes. Acknowledge that every home situation is unique and that they will make the rules themselves, based on what they think is possible in each individual home. Assure them that no one is going to tell them what they should do. Explain that many people have studied television's effect on children. They have learned that children who grow up in homes where TV is managed carefully have a better chance of doing well in school and elsewhere.

   Explain that before changes can be made, participants need to assess the current situation and decide what needs to change, if anything. This is a reality check exercise.

3. Assess the current situation by asking for a show of hands based on questions in Workshop 1 Handout 1.4 – Home TV Survey.

- How many people have children living at home younger than 5? Age 5–11? Age 12–18?
- How many people have more than one working TV?
- How many people subscribe to cable?
- How many homes have a video game system?
- How many homes have a computer?
- Who finds out what's on by
  - channel surfing
  - looking at the on-screen listings
  - looking at the TV listings in the newspaper or *TV Guide*

4. Using a chalk board or three flip chart pages, make three columns with the following headings: What They Watch, How Much They Watch, and How They Watch.

5. Based on the information gathered in Workshop 1 Handouts 1.4, 1.5, and 1.6 ask participants what they discovered about the way television is used

in their family. Record their comments under the appropriate heading. For example:

- Did your children watch more or less television than you predicted?
- How many hours per week do they watch?
- What programs do they watch?
- Which channels do they watch most?
- Do they watch specific programs all the way through or do they channel surf most of the time?
- Do you have any concerns about the programs they watch?

6. Ask participants to describe any concerns they have based on their observations. Record these under the appropriate heading. For example:

- My teenager watches too many trashy talk shows.
- My 6-year-old watches "The Simpsons" every night and talks like Bart.
- My 3-year-old pesters me for all the toys she sees on TV.
- My 10-year-old is always late for school because he can't tear himself away from TV.
- My teenager doesn't seem to remember anything he sees on TV.

7. Explain to participants that *how* children watch TV is very important. Even a trashy talk show (or violent cartoon or toy commercial) can become an opportunity for learning if parents can help children make sense of it. But before parents can help their kids make sense of what's on television, they have to put television in its place. That means making some decisions about *what* children watch and *how much* of their time TV takes up.

8. Pass out Handout 2.2 – TV's Place in Your Child's Day. Read the instructions to the group and ask them to fill out side one now, based on their observations from the past week.

You may want to have participants work in pairs for this exercise. Try to match people who have children in the same age group.

Explain to participants that you are going to ask them some questions. They don't have to answer these questions out loud, just consider them when trying to decide if TV is balanced in their child's lives. They may want to discuss them in their pairs.

- Is this child getting enough sleep for his/her age?
- Is the TV on when other family activities take place, such as meals?
- Is this child spending enough time in creative and imaginative play?
- Does this child spend enough time reading for pleasure or looking at books?
- Does this child have any hobbies or outside interests?
- Does this child do any chores around the house?
- Is this child spending enough time exercising or playing with friends?
- Is this child doing his or her best at school?

Tell participants the average viewing hours for children of different age groups and the average amount of time the television is on (see Handout 2.6 – Some Facts about TV's Place in the Family.) Ask them to consider if their child's use of television is the same as these averages, more than average, or less than average. Tell them how much of a person's life that adds up to and ask them if that is how they want their child to spend so much of his or her life.

Turn over Handout 2.2 – TV's Place in Your Child's Day. Explain that participants are going to make a chart to help them balance their time between television and other activities. Start by asking them to colour in the blocks for necessary activities such as sleeping, eating, school, homework, and household chores.

Next colour the blocks for commitments such as organized sports or lessons, practice, clubs, youth groups, church, part-time jobs, and so on.

Next colour the blocks for recreational activities such as creative play, crafts, exercise, visiting, neighbourhood games, and community events.

Now have participants count up how many times block are left over.

What else could their child do with that time?

Based on the amount of time left over, ask participants to decide how much time they think their child should be allowed to watch TV. Express this in hours per day, hours per week, and hours per month.

If a child is going to spend that much of his or her life watching TV, the question then becomes *what* does the parent think they should be watching. The next activity is to plan what they watch.

9. Distribute Handout 2.1 – Tips for Parents on How to Balance TV in the Home, as optional reading.

ACTIVITY 5 • *Make a Viewing Plan*

Purpose:

- Make an ideal viewing plan
- Recognize different kinds of programs.
- Develop some alternative plans for managing with TV at home

Time required: 25 minutes

Material required:

- Handouts from last workshop
- Handout 2.3 – Categories of Programs
- Handout 2.4 – Program Category Descriptions
- Handout 2.5 – Viewing Plan
- Handout 2.6 – Some Facts about TV's Place in the Family
- Local TV listings for the upcoming week (if possible one for each participant)

Directions:

1. Introduce the activity by telling parents that they are going to design an ideal viewing plan for a member of their family. Point out that this plan is ideal – something to work toward – but that they should be careful about how they approach making changes and not be disappointed if the person doesn't follow this plan exactly. Sometimes it takes a few tries before the ideal and the real work together. Keep trying.

You may want to keep participants in the pairs they worked in for the last activity.

2. Give Handout 2.3 – Categories of Programs, and Handout 2.4 – Program Category Descriptions, to participants. Have each participant choose one family member, preferably a child, whose viewing they documented in their Viewing Log. Using Handouts 2.3 and 2.4, ask them to write the title of each program their viewer watched in the appropriate column. Ensure that they understand the categories and definitions.

3. After the participants have completed Handout 2.3, ask them to consider the following questions. If they are working in pairs, ask them to discuss these questions:
   - What category of program does your viewer watch most?
   - Are you comfortable with the balance of programs this viewer sees?
   - What would you like this viewer to see less of? More of?

Using the TV listings, find alternative programs that are on when this viewer is watching.

- Are they in the category you would like them to increase? Decrease?
- Are there other programs you think they might benefit from?
- Do you know anything about these programs?
- How could you find out more?

4. Give Handout 2.5 – Viewing Plan, to participants. Read through it and make sure everyone understands the instructions. Give them time to make their plan.

5. Handout 2.6 – Some Facts about TV's Place in the Family, is optional reading for the participants.

ACTIVITY 6 • *Closing and Preview of Next Workshop*

Purpose:

- Evaluate the workshop
- Preview the next workshop
- Close the workshop

Time required: 10 minutes

Materials required:

- Handout 2.7 – Check List: Putting TV in Its Place
- Handout 2.8 – Evaluation Form

Directions:

1. Acknowledge parents' commitment to their children and congratulate them for working so hard to take charge of how television influences their children. Wish them luck with implementing the changes they have decided to make. Explain that Workshop 3 will explore how people watch TV and how they can use television to support school success.

2. Ask each person to state one thing they will try to change about TV in their home.

3. Give out Handout 2.7 – Checklist: Putting TV in Its Place. Explain that this is to help them remember the things they learned today so they can put TV in its place in their home.

4. Give out Handout 2.8, block or part of the block with the colour of the activity. With another colour, draw a line through each time block that the TV is on, even if this family member is not watching it.

Ideas for Adapting This Workshop

For Participants Who Aren't Parents

Participants who aren't parents can adapt these exercises to explore their own viewing rather than a child's. They can make a plan to manage their viewing.

For Participants with Limited Print Literacy Skill or Participants with Disabilities

You may want to spend more time in Activity 5 and identify specific programs that can support reading and writing and explore how parents can use them not only to help their children's learning but their own. You may want to inform them of any distance education opportunities available in your community. Some community cable and educational channels offer literacy and adult upgrading classes on television.

Changing the Workshop Sequence

If the facilitator feels that participants are ready to start managing TV and have identified their concerns already, Workshop 2 could be used as the first workshop.

Other Activities

1. Have participants imagine that they work for a company that makes and sells TVs. Their job is to write the owner's manual for the TV. What would they tell new TV owners about using it to their children's advantage?

2. Have participants interview someone who didn't have television as a child (e.g., grandparents, aunts, uncles, community elders). Participants can ask them what they did instead of watching TV.

3. Have participants discuss the difference between television when they were children and television as it is now. Ask them to describe the kinds of programs that were on and what they were about, how many channels they received, where the TV was located in the home, and when it was on and when it was off.

4. A Detroit newspaper offered $500 to 120 families if they would turn off their televisions for one month; 95 families turned down the offer (79 percent). Have participants ask their families what they would do if given the choice and report back to the group. Calculate the percentage and compare to the Detroit experience. Discuss the reasons people might turn down this kind of offer and why others might accept it.

5. Have participants watch a TV for 10 minutes without turning it on. Discuss how they feel. Ask them to repeat the activity at home, taking care to sit in the same place and in the same posture they usually do when watching TV. Have them try the experiment on their children or another member of the household and describe what they look like. Do they feel like

they are wasting time? What program do they wish they were watching? What else do they wish they were doing?

6. Make a video tape by recording off air, changing the channel every 2–3 seconds. View this tape with participants, asking them to identify the shows. Discuss the clues that let them know so quickly. It is surprising how much information viewers can glean from a few seconds of a program. Have participants identify the program categories using the descriptions in Handout 2.4 – Program Category Descriptions.

HANDOUT 2.1 • *Tips for Parents on How to Balance TV in the Home*

- If there is no reason to have the TV on, leave it off. Use a radio or stereo for background sound instead of the television.

- Encourage planned viewing. Select particular programs before turning on the set and turn it off when the program is over.

- Balance TV with other activities. Develop a time chart of your child's activities and work together to design a daily schedule that includes homework, play, recreation, and TV.

- Limit TV viewing. Rule out TV at certain times of the day, such as dinnertime or before breakfast. Parents can select a weekly viewing limit by having children select favourite programs from a television schedule.

- Don't put televisions in children's rooms.

- Use the VCR. Tape programs of interest that can be enjoyed by the whole family at an agreed-upon time.

- Link TV to other activities by building on children's interests and hobbies.

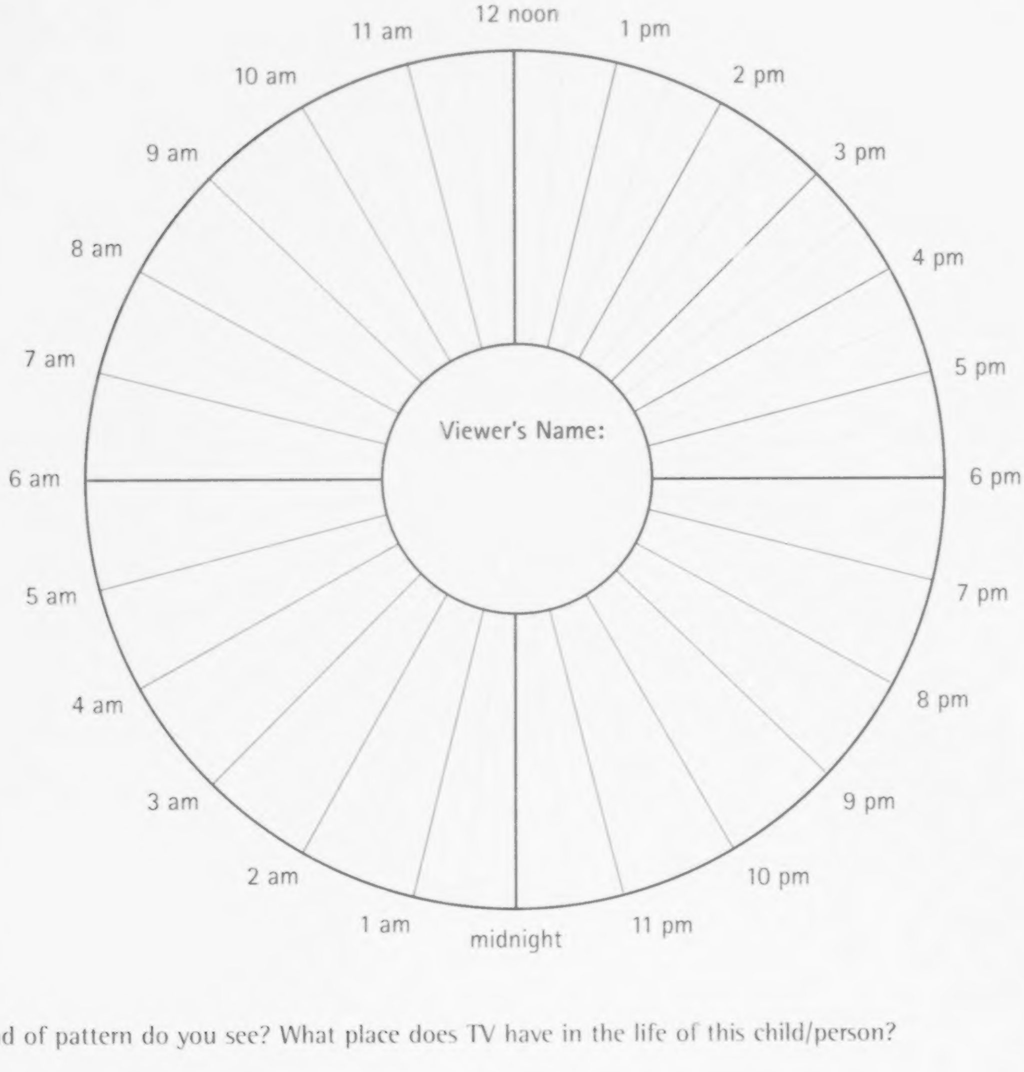
- Make watching TV an active process by focusing on specific program viewing. This will help children to understand that there is a difference between watching TV (whatever's on) and watching TV for a purpose (program).

- Children learn from their parents. If you watch a lot of television, your children probably will too.

HANDOUT 2.2 • *TV's Place in Your Child's Day*

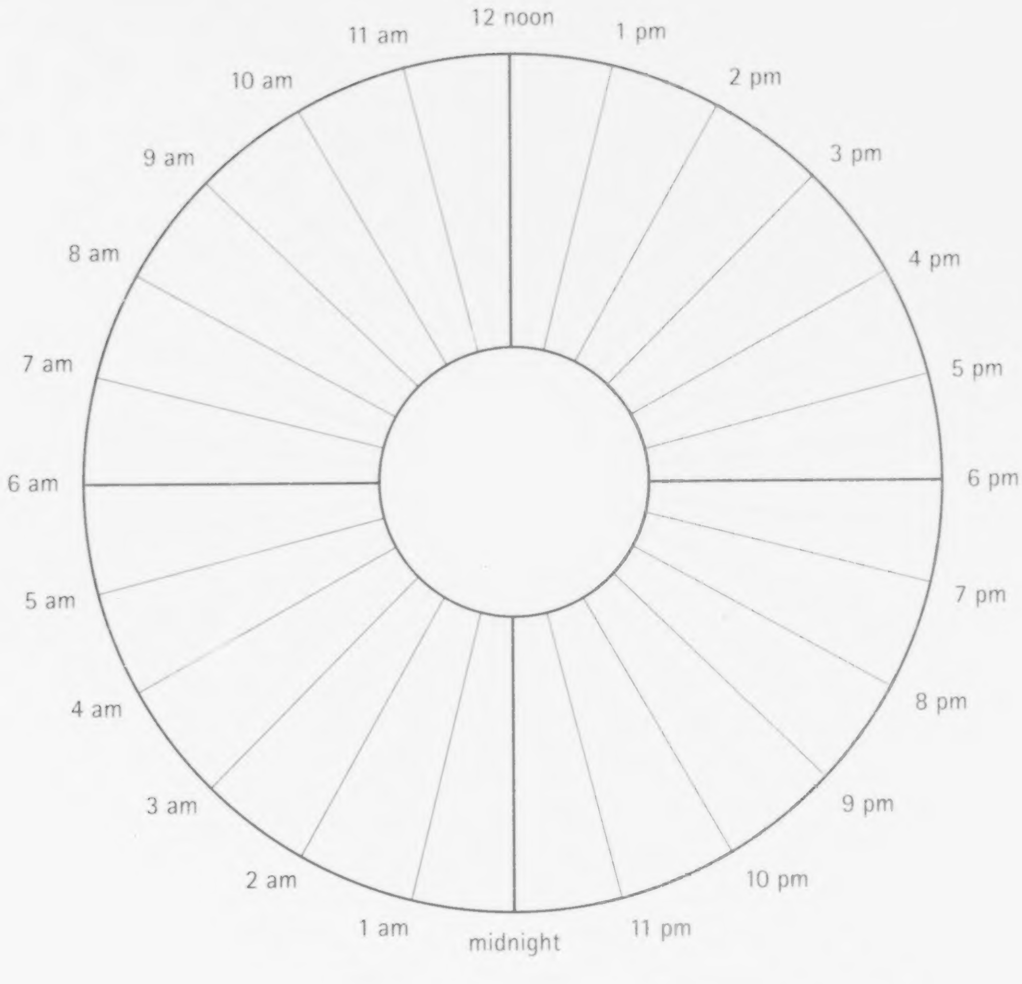
Directions

Use the graph below to show how one member of your family spends the 24 hours in a day. Fill in one segment for each half-hour spent on an activity. For example: sleeping, eating, playing, school, homework, watching TV, chores, sports, etc. Choose a colour to go with each activity. Colour in the block or part of the block that the TV is on, even if this family member is not watching it.


12 noon
1 pm
2 pm
3 pm
4 pm
5 pm
6 pm
7 pm
8 pm
9 pm
10 pm
11 pm
midnight
1 am
2 am
3 am
4 am
5 am
6 am
7 am
8 am
9 am
10 am
11 am
Viewer's Name:

What kind of pattern do you see? What place does TV have in the life of this child/person?

Use this chart to make a "balance sheet." Put TV in the place where you feel it belongs.


12 noon
1 pm
2 pm
3 pm
4 pm
5 pm
6 pm
7 pm
8 pm
9 pm
10 pm
11 pm
midnight
1 am
2 am
3 am
4 am
5 am
6 am
7 am
8 am
9 am
10 am
11 am

HANDOUT 2.3 • *Categories of Programs*

Please write down the title of each program your family member or child watched last week according to your viewing log. (See Handout 2.4 – Program Category Descriptions.)

PROGRAM CATEGORY	NAME OF PROGRAM WATCHED
Sitcom	
Talk / game show	
Soap opera	
Cartoons	
Children's	
Educational	
News / current affairs	
Drama	
Variety	
Music videos	
Sports / special events	
Other	

Parents should try to have their children watch programs from several categories rather than spend all their time with cartoons, sitcoms, or sports, depending on the age of the child.

HANDOUT 2.4 • *Program Category Descriptions*

Sitcoms

Situation comedies (sitcoms) are usually set in a home or business and have a regular cast of characters. The story is created by putting the characters in funny or awkward situations and watching how they deal with them.

Examples: "Roseanne," "Fresh Prince," "Murphy Brown," "Full House."

Talk/game shows

Talk shows and game shows have a host and usually a live audience.

Examples: "Oprah," "Rickie Lake," "The Price Is Right," "Where in the World Is Carmen Sandiego?"

Soap operas

Soap operas are usually on every day. They usually follow several characters and their complex relationships over a long period of time.

Examples: "All My Children," "The Young and the Restless." Some people consider evening shows like "ER" and "Melrose Place" to be soap operas with more action than the daytime soaps. The reason they are called soap operas is because in the early days of television, this kind of program was sponsored by companies who manufactured soap products.

Cartoons

Cartoons do not use live actors. The characters are drawn by an artist and animated using special film and computer techniques. Cartoons are usually made for children.

Examples: "TinyToon Adventures," "Rugrats," "Sailor Moon." Some programs have live actors and cartoon characters.

Children's programs

These programs are made for children but have live characters instead of cartoons.

Examples: "Dudley the Dragon," "Big Comfy Couch." Some programs for children combine live characters, cartoons, and animated sections. Example: "Sesame Street."

Educational programs

Many programs for young children could be considered educational.

Example: "Sesame Street," "Mr. Dressup," "Barney and Friends." Educational programs for older children include "Bill Nye the Science Guy," "StreetCents," and many programs on the Discovery Channel. Nature and science programs for adults are also in this category. Examples: "The Nature of Things" and "Nova."

News and current affairs

News and current affairs includes all local, national, and international newscasts. Current affairs programs are usually about events, issues, and people who appear in the news.

Examples: "The Fifth Estate," "W-5," "Frontline."

Drama

This category includes entertainment programs that aren't comedies. Often they are an hour long. A large number of them deal with crime and involve more action than sitcoms.

Examples: "North of 60," "NYPD Blue," "Star Trek." Drama can also be programs based on books such as *Pride and Prejudice*.

Variety

Variety programs usually are performed in front of a live audience. They often have a variety of performers and can be funny.
Examples: "This Hour Has 22 Minutes," "Saturday Night Live."

Music videos

Music videos are usually shown on specialty channels such as MuchMusic, MTV and NCN and CMT. Some other channels have special programs of music videos.

Sports and special events

Most sports events are live telecasts of a professional sports event.
Examples: "Hockey Night in Canada," World Figure Skating Championships. Special events programs only happen once in a while. Examples: Superbowl football, Academy Awards presentation.

HANDOUT 2.5 • Viewing Plan

Use this to make an ideal viewing plan for one viewer for the next week beginning tomorrow.

Viewing Plan (example)

For the week of: February 21 - 27

Viewer's Name: Emma Ross Viewer's Age: 11

Ideal number of hours of viewing per week: 7

One change I would like to make about the TV's location in my home:

move it out of the bedroom

One change I would like to make about *how much* television this viewer watches:

watch no more than 12 hours this week

One change I would like to make about *when* this viewer watches:

no TV before supper

One change I would like to make about *what* this viewer watches:

focus on educational programs

Ideal Viewing Plan (example)

Day	Start Time	Stop Time	Program Title	Channel	Conditions
Wed.	8:30 pm	9:00 pm	Making of the Titanic	Discovery	only if homework finished

HANDOUT 2.5 • *Viewing Plan*

Use this to make an ideal viewing plan for one viewer for the next week beginning tomorrow.

Viewing Plan

For the week of: ______________________________

Viewer's Name: ______________________________ Viewer's Age: __________

Ideal number of hours of viewing per week: __________

One change I would like to make about the TV's location in my home:

One change I would like to make about *how much* television this viewer watches:

One change I would like to make about *when* this viewer watches:

One change I would like to make about *what* this viewer watches:

Viewing Plan

DAY	START TIME	STOP TIME	PROGRAM TITLE	CHANNEL	CONDITIONS

HANDOUT 2.6 • *Some Facts About TV's Place in the Family*

Use this information to help you decide on how TV should fit into your family's life.

Where the TVs are:

- 99 percent of Canadian households have at least one TV. That amounts to 10.6 million homes.
- 50 percent of US households have two or more TVs.
- 75 percent of Canadian households subscribe to cable TV.
- 76 percent of Canadian households have a VCR.
- 41 percent of televisions in Canadian homes are in a bedroom.
- 33 percent are in the living room.
- 6 percent are in the family room.
- 3 percent are in the kitchen.
- 3 percent are in another room.
- In 1995 there were 127 TV stations in Canada. There were 1,163 in the US.

How much time do we spend with TV?

- 5:47 (5 hours, 47 minutes) is the average daily viewing time per household in Canada.
- 7:42 is the average daily viewing time per household in the United States.
- On average, people watch this much TV per week:

	Canada	United States
Persons 2+	23:04 (3:20/day)	30:35 (4:25/day)
Men 18+	23:58 (3:28/day)	30:04 (4:20/day)
Women 18+	26:19 (3:46/day)	35:07 (5:01/day)
Teens (12–17)	15:13 (2:08/day)	22:41 (3:12/day)
Children (2–11)	16:34 (2:20/day)	24:01 (3:29/day)

This does not include time spent watching videos or playing video games. [Source: *TVB Basics 95/96*, Television Bureau of Canada]. An additional 5 percent of viewing time, or an average of one hour per week, is spent watching VCR playback. [Source: Statistics Canada]

NOTE: These are average amounts of time. Some people spend less time with television than this. Many people spend more time. Some American research shows that many children watch TV for as much as 34 to 54 hours per week.

- 66 percent of American families watch TV while eating dinner. There is no statistic for Canada.
- Adolescents in the US spent about one-third of their free time watching television. [Source: *Media Effects on Adolescent Sexuality*, Advocates for Youth, 1995]
- Children aged 9 to 14 in the US spend over 20 percent of their waking hours watching TV, 9 percent on hobbies, and 3.5 percent on homework. [Source: *Media Effects on Adolescent Sexuality*, Advocates for Youth, 1995]
- Among American teens, the heaviest viewers come from low-income homes. [Source: *Media Effects on Adolescent Sexuality*, Advocates for Youth, 1995]
- When asked to choose between watching TV and spending time with their fathers, 54 percent of American children aged 4–6 chose television. [Source: *New Mexico Media Literacy Project: Activity Guide*]

Canadians spend more time with television than any other mass medium. Adults 18 years and over spend:

- 3:18 (3 hours, 18 minutes) per day with TV
- 2:13 with radio
- :33 with newspapers
- :14 with magazines

[Source: *TVB Basics 95/96*, The Television Bureau of Canada]

What do we watch?

In Canada, 68 percent of the programs children watch is foreign, mostly American. 46 percent is comedy and drama. [Source: Alliance for Children and Television]

- 74.5 percent of Anglophone Canadians' total viewing is of foreign programs, including US.
- 35 percent of Francophone Canadians' total viewing is foreign. [Source: Statistics Canada]
- Children under age 12 spend as much as 80 percent of their viewing time watching programs that are intended for adults. [Source: *Television and Children*, Ronald Pitzer, Minnesota Extension Services, University of Minnesota]
- Children watch 3 hours of commercials in an average viewing week. [Source: Based on information in *TVB Basics 95/96*, The Television Bureau of Canada]

By the time they start school, children in Canada will have seen an average of 8,000 murders and 100,000 other acts of violence and destruction on TV. [Source: *Television Violence: A Review of the Effects on Children of Different Ages*, Canadian Heritage, 1995]

- Prime time American network television contained 8 acts of violence per hour in 1992
- Saturday morning cartoons contain an average of 25 violent acts per hour.
- Music videos average 29 violent acts per hour. [Source: Alliance for Children and Television]

HANDOUT 2.7 • *Check List – Putting TV in Its Place*

Post this list at home. Use it to help your family become TV Thinkers.

1. Plan TV viewing and set guidelines
   about **when** to watch
   about **how much** to watch
   about **what** to watch
2. Watch together
3. Use TV to start other activities
4. Talk about TV
5. Enjoy

Hint for keeping TV in its place (example)
Post this information on the TV screen:

This TV is off until 4:00 pm

Next show: Beekman's World

Viewers: Emma and Ian

Things to do until then: homework
play ball
read
write a letter to Granma
check project made after last week's show

HANDOUT 2.7 • *Check List – Putting TV in Its Place*

Post this list at home. Use it to help your family become TV Thinkers.

1. Plan TV viewing and set guidelines
   about **when** to watch
   about **how much** to watch
   about **what** to watch
2. Watch together
3. Use TV to start other activities
4. Talk about TV
5. Enjoy

Hint for keeping TV in its place
Post this information on the TV screen:

This TV is off until ____________________

Next show: ____

Viewers: ____

Things to do until then: ____

____

____

____

____

HANDOUT 2.8 • *Evaluation*

1. Please state one surprising thing you learned in this workshop.

2. Did you find this workshop useful?

3. Will you come to the next workshop?

4. Is there anything that could be done to improve this workshop?

Resources

Adventures of Christina Valentine, [audiotape], Children's Television Resource and Education Centre
Award-winning audiotape series about a girl who looks to TV for solutions to her real-life problems. In a humorous, heroic adventure, she encounters many of the strange creatures and creation of the world behind the TV screen and begins to realize that she needs to think more critically about TV's place in her life. Skilled use of sound effects makes this tape appealing to TV watchers ages 7+.

* Indicates that resource is included in ThinkTV Resources collection at each Literacy Resource Centre. (See Where to Find Resources)

** Indicates that resource is included only at the Nova Scotia Department of Education, Metro Region Literacy Resource Centre. (See Where to Find Resources.)

** *The Wired Bedroom,* Office of the County Superintendent of Schools, Santa Barbara County, CA. May 1989

TV-Turnoff Organizer's Kit 1996, TV Free America, 1322 18th St, NW, Washington DC 20036, (202) 887-0436

* *TVB Basics 95/96,* The Television Bureau of Canada

Television and the Lives of Our Children, Gloria DeGaetano, Train of Thought, 1993

Literacy in the Television Age: The Myth of the TV Effect, Susan B. Neuman, Temple University, Ablex Publishing Corporation, Norwood, New Jersey, 1991

**Prime Time Parent* [workshop kit with videos] Alliance for Children and Television and Health Canada, 1995
Handouts 2.1 and 2.2 have good information about child development and TV. Handout 2.7 can help parents assess their children's viewing habits.

Screen Smarts: A Family Guide to Media Literacy, Gloria DeGaetano and Kathleen Bander, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996
Chapter 2, A New Approach to the Home Screen, addresses many of the issues raised in *ThinkTV* Workshop 2.

* *Shockwaves: Television in America,* [video] Marlin Motion Pictures, 1984. 32 minutes.

Television and Your Child: A Guide for Concerned Parents, Carmen Luke, Kagan and Woo Ltd. Toronto, 1988

The Smart Parent's Guide to Kids' TV, Milton Chen, KQED Books, 1994
Unit III: Taking Control of the Set addresses many of the issues raised in *ThinkTV* Workshop 2.

"The Zen TV Experiment," *Adbusters Quarterly,* Summer 1993

** *Use TV to Your Child's Advantage,* Singer, Singer and Zuckerman, Acropolis Books Ltd. 1990

"Virtual Unreality: Television, families and communities in the nineties," Allan Mirabelli, *Transition,* The Vanier Institute for the Family, March 1995

For Use with Participants' Children

- *Arthur's TV Trouble*, Mark Brown
- *Jim Meets the Thing*, Miriam Cohen
- *Mouse TV*, Matt Novak
- *The Berenstain Bears and Too Much TV*, Stan and Jan Berenstain
- *The Day Our TV Broke Down*, Betty R. Wright
- *The Problem with Pulcifer*, Florence P. Heide
- *The Week Mom Unplugged the TVs*, Terry Wolfe Phelan
- *The Wretched Stone*, Chris Van Allsburg
- *When the TV Broke*, Harriet Ziefert

Think TV:

A Guide to

Managing TV

in the Home

Purposes of Workshop 2

Explore ideas about managing TV in the home and family.

Explore issues about how much time people spend watching TV and the kind of programs they watch.

Develop a plan for each participant to put TV in its place.

WORKSHOP 3

Using TV to Support School Success

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Overview

Two distinct approaches to dealing with television and learning are teaching *about* television and teaching *through* television. Most workshops in this manual use the first approach. Workshop 3, however, recognizes that television offers some excellent material for teaching important language, social, and other skills necessary for school success. This approach is known as teaching *through* television, and many parents and children can benefit from it. The main idea is that by applying critical thinking strategies, any television message can be used to stimulate thinking and encourage learning.

In this workshop, participants will learn how to encourage active viewing. They will learn to identify and locate programs that can support school success for their own children, and they will find ways to link television to other learning resources such as games, maps, books, and Internet sites. They will also explore how they can use television to stimulate and support learning even if the programs don't appear to have much educational value.

Parents of preschoolers will find this workshop helpful for instilling good television habits at an early age. This workshop will also be useful for parents of children who watch television often and want to make the best of it. These could be children who are homebound due to illness or disability or who live in isolated or dangerous areas without many opportunities for other activities. Research shows that children who live in poverty or in families in distress watch the most television.

Even if parents successfully limit the amount of time children spend watching TV and carefully select the programs they watch, they may be concerned about their children's school success. Many worry that TV is taking time away from learning to read or practising reading and writing.

Outcomes

- Participants will learn how to encourage active viewing.
- Participants will learn to identify and locate programs that can support school success for their own children.
- Participants will find ways to link television to other learning resources such as games, maps, books, and Internet sites.
- Participants will also explore how they can use television to stimulate and support learning even if the programs don't appear to have much educational value.

Workshop 3 will reinforce the following:

Critical Thinking Links		Media Literacy Links	Critical Viewing Strategies
Four Main Components of Critical Thinking Process	Five Common Phases of Critical Thinking	Key Concepts about Media Literacy	
✓ Questioning assumptions	Trigger event	Television is serious business	✓ Reality check
✓ Detecting bias	Appraisal	All television messages are made up	✓ Talk about TV
✓ Analysing context	Exploration	Television uses special techniques to get ideas across and make viewers react a certain way	Find questions
Seeking alternatives	Finding alternatives	✓ Viewers affect the meaning of television messages	Watch TV
	Integration	Television affects the way we see our own lives and the rest of the world	
		✓ Television must be managed in the home	

Background Reading

TV and School Success

Parents have particular concerns about the impact of television on children's success in school. These concerns are valid. Research indicates that most children watch an average of 3 to 4 hours of TV per day, approximately 28 hours per week. Each year most children spend about 1500 hours in front of the TV, compared to 900 hours in the classroom. Further, research indicates that children who watch 4 or more hours of TV per day spend less time on school work, have poorer reading skills, play less well with friends, and have fewer hobbies than children who watch less television.

What seems to make a difference in the influence of television to interfere with or to enhance learning is the involvement of parents. Children whose parents influence how much television their children watch, what they watch, and how they watch may have a better chance of succeeding at school.

Television viewing habits and patterns are usually formed before children start school at age 5. The best time for parents to establish good viewing patterns is early in the preschool years. Parents of older children can still change children's viewing habits during school years, but it will take more effort.

While television is an important influence, parents need to also consider other factors related to school success, such as children's health, quality of the school experience, family relationships, family support for learning, and so on. All factors are interrelated and affect learning, but managing television in the home is a strategy that parents can learn and apply for immediate impact.

Key Areas of School Success Supported by Television

1. LANGUAGE SKILLS • Language skills are developed through watching, listening, thinking, writing, and speaking. Children and adults need opportunities to practise language skills, and television can serve as a springboard for language-related activities.

Studies show that television aids the development of vocabulary until age 10, but after that can hinder it. Television can stimulate children's interest in reading by steering them towards books based on favourite TV shows or characters. Children need to talk about TV shows to help them practise and develop speaking and recall skills. Children invest mental energy in figuring out what a program means based on their own experience and the experience of others.

Television programs can inspire children's writing projects. Writing a review of a television program can be as challenging as a school book report. Even the silliest situation comedy can be analysed as a text. Parents and teachers can encourage children to discuss storylines, plot, characters, motivation, and alternative actions.

The Internet is a resource for television viewers. Many television series have Internet sites where children and adults can learn more about character and plots. They can even comment on ideas or storylines for upcoming shows.

2. CONCENTRATION • Children need to pay attention in school and to concentrate on their tasks. Many people worry the TV interferes with the ability to concentrate. Since television often shifts attention from one thing to another too quickly, it can be difficult to concentrate or even remember what was on a few minutes ago. Preschoolers can develop con-

centration skills by watching slower-paced programs that use "child-directed speech" and appealing story lines. Older children can be encouraged to watch a program from start to finish rather than constantly switching channels or "channel surfing."

3. IMAGINATION AND CREATIVITY • Television is criticized for not exercising the imagination to the same extent as reading, listening to radio, or play activities do. However, many programs for young children are designed to inspire creative play and stimulate the imagination. Entertainment and learning are intertwined through story telling, role playing, and music. Children begin to see that learning can be fun by experiencing creative play. Older children can learn creatively through programs pertaining to hobbies, skills, and interests. They learn that television can be a source of information-news, history, geography, math, politics, and literature, as well as a form of entertainment.

4. SOCIAL SKILLS • School success includes the development of good interpersonal skills. People worry that television develops negative or "antisocial" attitudes and takes away time from practising pro-social skills. Television presents ideas and images that often are not appropriate for children because they can contradict or distort the values and teaching of family, school, and community. Children are exposed to violence; stereotypes about gender, race, class, and nationality; explicit sexual behaviour; and endless advertisements about snack food, alcohol, and material possessions.

Understandably, parents blame television when their children act out behaviour and ideas that parents don't like. Imitation of television action is common in young children. Older children and adolescents study television for clues about relationships, especially romantic interests and gender roles.

Parents can discuss issues that television presents to help children develop more positive attitudes than what they may see on television. They can explore with them the social interaction and relationships of characters in a series and can help children identify with positive role models. Discussions about how people behave inappropriately on television versus what is acceptable at home can help put television's influence into perspective.

Parents can put television in its place so that children can do homework, read, play, exercise, communicate with family and friends, and become involved in the community. They can teach children to be discriminating viewers.

Choosing TV Programs to Support School Success

Parents often want lists of programs that are considered "good" TV. Based on viewer interests, advertising criteria, and changing seasons and trends, television changes too fast to make a useful list. People also have varying opinions on what constitutes good TV. Parents can learn to identify programs that are suitable for the age and interests of their children.

Parents and educators may assume that only educational programs support thinking and learning. Many such programs have been designed with that purpose and are judged by public opinion to be effective; however children shouldn't be expected to watch only educational programs, just as they shouldn't be expected to read only textbooks. Television, books, and other media are also meant to provide enjoyment, relaxation, and entertainment. Choosing good programs for education and entertainment promotes active viewing and active learning.

Snapping out of the "Teletrance"

American psychologist Thomas Wear describes two states of consciousness that relate to television viewing. He describes the "teletrance" as a trance-like state showing a fixed, unblinking stare, slack facial muscles, and immobile body posture. This is a passive state, similar to the one people enter when they are hypnotized.

In contrast, the state of "participatory consciousness" is active, with constant change and movement. All senses are engaged, not just sight and sound. The body is alert and moving. Instead of being fixed on one point, eyes are moving and searching. Attention shifts between outward stimuli and inner reflection. This state can lead to questioning and making connections to other experiences and knowledge, essential components of critical thinking. This is the state most people are in when they are not watching television.

Active viewers can snap out of the teletrance and stay in participatory consciousness while viewing. Parents can teach their children to be active viewers and critical thinkers by watching television with them, talking during programs, and discussing programs after watching. When people stay in participatory consciousness, they can learn more and be more critical and analytical about what they learn.

Active Viewing with "Junk" TV

It may be possible to limit preschoolers and younger school children to educational programs specifically designed for their age group. As children grow older, they lose interest in children's educational television and want to see more entertainment programs. Many parents and educators don't think that cartoons, situation comedies, soap operas, music videos, and action adventures offer much support for positive learning and education. One educator has described those kinds of programs as "chewing gum for the mind." Others simply call it "junk TV."

Addressing concerns about program content can lead to exploration of viewing habits. Participants can be challenged to watch programs they have strong opinions about but have never watched. Parents should at least investigate the programs their children want to watch, challenge them, and find ways to make sense of them. Ultimately, it is up to parents to control children's exposure to these programs according to their own values.

Workshop Outline

Purpose:
Participants learn how to make TV viewing an active experience that can support learning, thinking, and school success.

Before you start:

- Read Background Reading.
- Photocopy handouts for this workshop.
- Try all the activities yourself.

You will need:

- Overhead projector or photocopies of the overheads for all participants
- Chalkboard and chalk or flip chart; markers and tape for putting up flip chart pages
- Evaluation Form

Overheads:

3.1 Purpose of Workshop 3

Handouts:

3.1 TV and School Success
3.2 How Children Watch TV: For Parents of Preschoolers (2–5)
3.3 How Children Watch TV: For Parents of School-age Children (6–11)
3.4 How Children Watch TV: For Parents of Adolescents (12–17)
3.5 Tips for Active Viewing
3.6 TV Game – Lisa's Big Words
3.7 TV Game – Kid Critics
3.8 TV Game – TV Bingo
3.9 TV Game – Lyrics and Language
3.10 TV Game – TV Geography
3.11 Evaluation Form

Total time required: 2 hours, 45 minutes

Agenda

Activity	Activity Name	Time Required	Material Required
1	Introduction	15 min	Overhead 3.1 – Purposes of Workshop 3
2	Warm-up	15 min	
3	The Ideal Nanny	40 min	Handout 3.1 – TV and School Success
	BREAK	10 min	
4A	How Children Watch TV	45 min	Handout 3.2 – How Children Watch TV: For Parents of Preschoolers (2–5) Handout 3.3. – How Children Watch TV: For Parents of School-aged Children (6–11) Handout 3.4 – How Children Watch TV: For Parents of Adolescents (12–17)
	OR		
4B	TV Games	30 min	Handout 3.5 – Tips for Active Viewing Handout 3.6 – TV Game: Lisa's Big Words Handout 3.7 – TV Game: Kid Critics Handout 3.8 – TV Game: TV Bingo Handout 3.9 – TV Game: Lyrics and Language Handout 3.10 – TV Geography
5	Closing	10 min	Handout 3.11 – Evaluation Form

ACTIVITY 1 • *Introduction*

Purpose:
Introduce the facilitator, participants, and agenda

Time required: 15 minutes

Materials required:
Overhead 3.1 – Purpose of Workshop 3

Directions:

1. Welcome participants. Acknowledge their commitment to their own learning and their children's by participating in this workshop.

2. If necessary, ask the participants to introduce themselves telling the gender and age of their children.

3. Follow up on the last workshop by asking if anyone has questions, problems, or comments based on the last workshop. Make a place in the agenda to deal with anything that comes up.

4. Present the purpose of this workshop using Overhead 3.1 and explain agenda and time frame.

ACTIVITY 2 • Warm-up

Purpose:
Warm up the group and trigger thinking about active viewing

Time required: 15 minutes

Materials required:
Flip chart or chalkboard

Directions:

1. Ask each participant to picture in their mind how their children look when they are watching TV. Ask the participants to describe what they see.
2. Ask all parents of young children (2–5) to act out or write down what their children do or look like when watching TV. Ask the other participants to describe what they see.
3. Ask all parents of school-age children (6–11) demonstrate how their children look when watching TV. Ask the other participants to describe what they see, including differences and similarities between the two age groups.
4. Ask all parents of adolescents (12+) how their children look when they are watching TV. Ask the other participants to describe what they see, including differences and similarities among the three age groups.

This activity should be fun. Encourage parents to exaggerate for dramatic effect when demonstrating viewing postures and when describing. Make sure they are really demonstrating their own children's behaviour, not a stereotype of what they think you expect. The usual pattern is that preschoolers are more active than older children and often stand or sit on trikes or other toys. Encourage parents to act out those individual acts. Parents of older children should be encouraged to act out occasional activities like using the remote control, eating, jabbing siblings, etc. Don't rush the "posing" part of this activity. Part of the purpose is to get people imagining the "teletrance" and what it feels like to watch TV.

5. Explain the difference between "teletrance" and "participatory consciousness" (page 3.7) and relate it to the behaviour they have just described and demonstrated. Explain that this workshop is about how to encourage viewers to stay in participatory consciousness while they watch TV.

ACTIVITY 3 • *The Ideal Nanny*

Purpose:
To learn what children need to be successful at school and how to use television to help.

Time required: 40 minutes

Materials required:
Handout 3.1 – TV and School Success

Directions:

1. Present the following scenario. Participants may want to close their eyes to concentrate.

   In Workshop 1 you imagined television as a captivating stranger, and you've been learning more about that stranger. In Workshop 2, we looked at television as an unruly houseguest, and you learned how to keep that guest under control. In this workshop, imagine you are looking for the ideal nanny. Imagine that you don't have to worry about the cost. You want a live-in nanny to spend some quality time with your children and help them do well at school. Think about the kinds of things your children need to know or do in order to succeed at school. What things do they need to learn to do? What could a nanny do to help? Keep in mind your child's age when you are thinking of these things. Age will affect what children need to know or are able to do.

2. Ask participants what they think their child needs to know or do in order to do well at school. List them on a flip chart or chalkboard. (Examples: know the alphabet and numbers, be a good reader, be excited about learning, do better at math, how to have more friends, be more gentle.)

3. Explain that there are four types of skills that children need to succeed in school. They are language skills, concentration, imagination, and social skills. Group the ideas under each of those four categories.

4. Ask participants what they think the ideal nanny could do to help achieve these goals? List them on a flip chart page or chalkboard. (Examples: teach the alphabet and numbers, tell stories and encourage a love of reading, explain math concepts, tell stories about friendships and families, show people being gentle, show places and activities parents don't have time for.)

5. Ask participants to name television programs that show the things they listed. If they have trouble coming up with names, give them program listings and ask them to look at the titles for ideas. Make sure they look at morning television and channels they don't usually watch. When a participant names a program, ask him or her to describe it for the rest of the group.

6. Divide the group into groups according to the ages of their children. (2–5, 6–11 and 11–17) and give each participant a copy of Handout 3.1. Ask them to discuss the questions.

7. Bring the group back together and ask each group to summarize their discussion. Encourage participants to use the space on Handout 3.1 to make notes about programs and ideas they may want to remember.

ACTIVITY 4A • *How Children Watch TV*

If time is strictly limited, and according to the priorities of the group, choose either 4A or 4B. Activity 4A will be useful for parents who want to spend more time learning how to choose programs that will help school success. Activity 4B provides tips and ideas for parents who want to make TV viewing a learning activity on the "ideal nanny's" days off, when their children probably won't be watching "educational" TV.

Purpose:
To learn about how children watch television at different ages and how to choose suitable programs for each age.

Time required: 45 minutes

Materials required:
Handout 3.2 – How Children Watch TV: For Parents of Preschoolers (2–5)
Handout 3.3 – How Children Watch TV: For Parents of School-aged Children (6–11)
Handout 3.4 – How Children Watch TV: For Parents of Adolescents (12–17)

Directions:

1. Explain that children watch television differently according to their ages, and they can learn different things from television according to their age. In this activity, participants will learn about the way children of different ages make sense of television and discuss ideas and programs that can help their children succeed at school.

2. Divide participants into three groups according to their children's age groups (2–5 years, 6–11 years, 11–17 years). Give them Handouts 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4 according to their group. Ask each group to compare their children's viewing to the descriptions in the handouts and discuss the questions. Consider the reading levels of participants and ask one person in each group to read the handouts to the rest of the group. Ask each group to choose a reporter to explain the discussion to the rest of the participants at the end of the activity.

ACTIVITY 4B • *TV Games*

Purpose:
To learn some games to play while watching TV so that any program can be used for learning.

Time required: 30 minutes

Materials required:
Handout 3.5 – Tips for Active Viewing
Handout 3.6 – TV Game: Lisa's Big Words
Handout 3.7 – TV Game: Kid Critics
Handout 3.8 – TV Game: TV Bingo
Handout 3.9 – TV Game: Lyrics and Language
Handout 3.10 – TV Game: TV Geography

Directions:

1. Explain that the "ideal nanny" will have some evenings and days off, and children will be watching television that doesn't necessarily support school success. This activity looks at some ideas for turning almost any program into a learning activity.

2. Explain that the first step is to keep viewers in participatory consciousness while viewing. Handout 3.5, Tips for Active Viewing, gives some ideas for doing this. Ask participants to stay in the groups they were in for Activity 3 and discuss how they could use the ideas in Handout 3.5 with their children.

3. Put copies of the TV game Handouts 3.6 – 3.10 (TV Games) in separate piles around the room. Ask participants to look at each game and pick one that they think they could do with their children.

For learners with limited reading skills, you may want to read each game aloud.

4. Ask learners to work in pairs. Have each person take turns and practise how they are going to explain the game to their children and how they are going to convince them that they should play it.

ACTIVITY 5 • *Closing and Preview of Next Workshops*

Purpose:

- Evaluate the workshop
- Close the workshop

Time required: 10 minutes

Materials required:
Handout 3.11 – Evaluation Form

Directions:

1. Acknowledge parents' commitment to their children and congratulate them for working so hard to learn how to use TV to support school success.

2. Ask each person to name one educational program they are going to watch and one active viewing exercise they are going to try with their children.

3. Give out Handout 3.11 – Evaluation Form. Ask participants to complete and return it now.

4. If the optional workshops are being held, tell when the next workshop will take place and the topic.

Ideas for Adapting This Workshop

For Participants Who Aren't Parents

Keep in mind that this workshop is designed to encourage active viewing and to assist in finding educational programs. Some participants who aren't parents may know children they are concerned about and may want to learn some of these ideas. For participants who want to use television to support their own learning, most activities can be easily adapted to their situation by simply shifting the focus away from children's programs. Activity 3, The Ideal Nanny, can be adapted to have learners state their goals for their own learning, but you will need to spend more time locating educational programs for adults such as those on some of the specialty channels. Some of the TV Games (Handouts 3.6 – 3.10) can also be adapted for adults.

Some formal courses are offered on television. This is called distance education. Learners can register for the course through the university, community college, or Department of Education that offers it. The lessons are shown on television, and the student sends assignments through the mail or participates in the television class by phone. Try to show learners a sample program.

For Participants with Limited Print Literacy Skills and Those with Disabilities

It will be important to encourage participants in this group to use television programs as others would use text. Spend some extra time helping them learn how to decipher the TV listings so they can find educational programs. Have them watch programs and discuss them using a book report format. Ask them to write plot descriptions and character descriptions for dramatic productions and to discuss and write what they learn from information programs such as the news and documentaries.

Some in this group can benefit greatly from distance education programs. Help them find those programs and the institutions that sponsor them. Some community cable channels offer literacy and upgrading programs through television, which can be very appealing to learners embarrassed by their low literacy skills but who want to improve.

Many homebound adults or those with disabilities can use distance education very effectively. As technology changes, television and phone connections will be used more and more for educational purposes.

Changing Sequence

If participants and instructors want to spend more time focusing on the details of critical viewing, this workshop could be skipped altogether.

Other Activities

Search the Internet for Sites Related to TV Programs

Take participants where they can access the Internet such as a public or school library or community college and have them search for TV-related sites. See the Resource Lists at the end of this workshop for Internet sites.

Watch Educational TV

Borrow some educational videos from your local library or education resource centre, or use *Cable in the Classroom* programs, which are commercial-free and copyright cleared for educational use and can be taped directly without infringing copyright. (See Tips for Working with Television, Introduction, page xiv.) Watch these with participants and practise TV games and active viewing tips while you watch. *Cable in the Classroom* schedules and teaching guides are available on the Internet (see Resource List at the end of this workshop for address), from your local cable television company, or by subscription.

Library Scavenger Hunt

Have participants go to the library and find books, magazines or videos related to specific programs or actors. Examples might include books on UFOs or documentaries for "X-files" fans, sports books and magazines for sports fans, classic horror novels or movies for *Goosebumps* fans, or *Anne of Green Gables* books for "Road to Avonlea" fans. This activity can be used to introduce learners of all ages to the library catalogue system and resources.

Children's Books about TV

Bring some children's books and videos about television for the group, and explore them with participants.

See the list of resources for children for this workshop and for Workshop 2.

HANDOUT 3.1 • *TV and School Success*

School success depends on four main areas. TV can have a good or a bad effect on each area, depending how you use it. Many other things affect school success but this workshop only looks at television.

1. Language Skills

These are the language skills that schools work hard to develop:

- reading and viewing
- listening and speaking
- writing and representing

Children of all ages need time to practise these skills at home. They need quiet times to be read to and to practise reading. They need to listen well and learn from what they listen to. They need to talk about what they read, see, hear, and think. It helps them remember things and learn more from what they have seen and heard. They need to practise writing about things they care about. They can also learn to make their own newspapers, advertisements, radio programs, and videotapes.

- Name some TV programs that can help develop language skills.
- Discuss how parents could use television to help develop language skills.

2. Concentration

Children need to pay attention to instructions. They need to know how to ignore distractions but listen for what is important. Some people worry that TV prevents people from learning how to concentrate. They think kids get used to things changing too fast on TV so that they don't learn to pay attention to anything for very long.

- Name some TV programs that could help concentration because the pace is slow enough for children to concentrate.
- Discuss how you can use TV to help children learn to concentrate and pay attention.

3. Imagination

People have to imagine scenes, sounds, and other things when they read a book or listen to the radio, but TV gives viewers pictures, sounds, and movement without having to do any work. Some people think that is the reason so many children would rather watch TV than read. They think children's imagination and creativity get lazy when watching TV.

- Name some TV programs that stimulate children's imagination.
- Discuss how you can use TV to get kids to use their imagination.

4. Social Skills

Kids do better in school if they know how to get along with other people. Some people worry that TV teaches kids how to solve problems with fighting and insults. They think TV gives kids wrong ideas about school, some racial groups, and the way men and women get along.

- Name some TV programs that show positive social relations.
- Discuss how you can use TV to help children develop good social skills.

Another tip for supporting school success
Ask your children or their teacher what books, ideas, and projects they are studying at school. You can find television programs, videos, or other resources that relate to these topics. For example, if the class is studying a certain country in geography, you can look for programs that come from that country or about that country. If the class is studying an event such as World War II, you can find documentaries about it or movies or mini-series set in that time period. Some parents research the programs that are offered through *Cable in the Classroom* and tape them for teachers to use in class.

HANDOUT 3.2 • How Children Watch TV: For Parents of Preschoolers (2–5)

Here is a description of how most preschoolers watch TV. Read through the list and discuss it. Have you noticed the same things in your child? Have you noticed different things?

Preschoolers (2–5)

- miss a lot because they don't know many words, sounds, and images
- pay attention to TV for only half the time it is on
- believe what they see
- are attracted by loud music, rapid movements, and rapid scene changes
- enjoy imitating the actions in a program; this includes repeating words, letters, jingles, or imitating fighting moves
- remember characters and think of them as friends
- include TV characters and storylines in imaginary play
- usually have a favourite program
- prefer programs meant for children
- don't understand the difference between commercials and programs

Some programs are made to help them learn. Parents and older children often find them boring and slow, but preschoolers like them. Name some that your children watch.

Other programs are made to sell something to children or their parents, not to help them get ready for school activities. These programs are usually louder and move faster than educational programs. Name some that your children watch.

Here are some things to look for when choosing programs for preschoolers.

Good programs

- inspire imagination
- show children as participants and main characters
- allow children to play an active role
- promote positive social, intellectual, emotional, and creative development
- respect children's intellectual development and critical judgment
- are technically excellent

Good programs do not

- exploit feelings of envy, fear, competitiveness, or anger
- oversimplify
- use stereotypes
- use violence to make something more exciting or fill up time
- sell toys

Name some programs that you think would be good for your preschooler to watch.

[Based on information contained in *Prime Time Parent*, Alliance for Children and Television, 1995, and *A Review of the Effects of Television Violence on Children of Different Ages*, Wendy L. Josephson, Canadian Heritage]

HANDOUT 3.3 • *How Children Watch TV: For Parents of School-age Children (6–11)*

Here is a description of how most school-age children watch TV. Read through the list and discuss it. Have you noticed the same things in your child? Have you noticed different things?

Elementary school age (6–11)
- can understand most words, images, and sounds
- can follow more plots and longer programs
- pay attention to TV most of the time it is on
- begin to understand the difference between imaginary and real
- understand the importance of facts but still need help recognizing the difference between fact and opinion
- understand the purpose of commercials and like to watch them
- may think shows for young children are too immature
- don't think of TV characters as personal friends anymore
- can think about what they see without acting it out
- enjoy verbal humour as their language skills develop
- enjoy cartoons, situation comedies and action-adventure, and some horror programs more than children's educational programs

Most school-age children watch programs that are meant for adults about 60 percent of the time. But for 40 percent of the time they watch programs intended for children their age. There are many programs made for this age group. Some of them can support school success. Others do not.

Here are some things to watch for when choosing programs to help school-age children.

Good programs
- inspire imagination
- show children as participants and main characters
- allow children to play an active role
- promote positive social, intellectual, emotional, and creative development
- respect children's intellectual development and critical judgment
- are technically excellent

Good programs do not
- exploit feelings of envy, fear, competitiveness, or anger
- oversimplify
- use stereotypes
- use violence to make something more exciting or fill up time
- sell toys

Make a list of programs that are meant for this age group and discuss which ones can support school success, which do not, and why.

[Sources: *Prime Time Parent*, Alliance for Children and Television, 1995, and *A Review of the Effects of Television Violence on Children of Different Ages*, Wendy L. Josephson, Canadian Heritage]

HANDOUT 3.4 • How Children Watch TV: For Parents of Adolescents (12–17)

Here is a description of how most adolescents watch TV. Read through the list and discuss it. Have you noticed the same things in your child? Have you noticed different things?

Adolescents
- are able to watch with a critical eye but need encouragement
- like to figure out how special effects are created and can detect poor effects
- worry about being "tricked" by TV; this can begin at an earlier age
- compare real life with TV to check if TV is worth believing
- may be upset by seeing examples of injustice or people or animals suffering
- can tell the difference between their own feelings and those of a TV character
- are very critical of commercials; begin to change channels rather than watch commercials
- when they are older, prefer to use television to relax and "veg out" even though they are able to watch more critically
- enjoy dramas, soap operas, sports, music programs, and science fiction

Adolescents spend most of their time watching programs meant for adults. There are not many programs made for this age group. There are programs that could help them with school success such as documentaries and science programs. But most adolescents choose not to watch them.

How can parents help adolescents use TV to support school success?

Here are some things to watch for when choosing programs.

Good programs
- inspire imagination
- show adolescents as participants and main characters
- promote positive social, intellectual, emotional, and creative development
- respect viewers' intellectual and critical judgment
- are technically excellent

Good programs do not
- exploit feelings of envy, competitiveness and anger
- use stereotypes
- use violence to make something more exciting or fill up time
- sell products

Make a list of programs that could support school success for this age group.

[Sources: *Prime Time Parent*, Alliance for Children and Television, 1995, and *A Review of the Effects of Television Violence on Children of Different Ages*, Wendy L. Josephson, Canadian Heritage]

HANDOUT 3.5 • *Tips for Active Viewing*

Here are some tips to help children become active viewers. Active viewers can learn more from what they watch. They can also think more clearly and critically about what they see.

In a small group, discuss which of these tips would work with your children. What would have to change in your family to encourage active viewing?

Talk before you watch

Plan times to watch with children. Decide on which program you are going to watch and why. Watch programs, not TV.

Talk while you watch

Comment on what you see while you are watching. Make predictions about what will happen next, ask questions, point out details. Name the category of the program. (See Workshop 2, Handout 2.4, Program Category Descriptions, for a description of program categories.) Turn off the sound and tell the story yourself. This can be fun for cartoons and sports events.

When watching with preschoolers, point out when the program stops and the commercial begins. Most young children don't understand the difference between the program and commercials.

Talk after you watch

Discuss programs after you have seen them or in commercial breaks. If you haven't been able to watch with your children, ask them to describe the program to you and discuss it with them.

Keep moving

Take frequent and regular movement breaks while watching TV. Young children usually move and play with toys when they watch. This should be encouraged. If they lose interest in TV, let them go. One family keeps the children's books on a shelf under the TV and finds that preschoolers often get so involved with the books that they don't notice when the TV is turned off. They are probably paying attention to something more important.

One family with older children has push-up and sit-up contests during commercials. Many people do household tasks such as fold laundry, iron clothes, polish shoes or fingernails, knit, sew, or even read. Children can help with some of these tasks.

Question the commercials

Instead of flipping to another channel during commercials, watch the commercials and ask, Who are these ads aimed at? Who do they think might buy the products on these ads?

HANDOUT 3.6 • *TV Game: Lisa's Big Words*

Bart Simpson's sister, Lisa, knows a lot of big words. The next time you watch "The Simpsons," write down some of the big words Lisa uses and discuss what they mean. Look up the meaning in a dictionary. Sometimes even Bart uses big words. Find out what they mean, too.

obnoxious: annoying or objectionable

HANDOUT 3.7 • *TV Game: Kid Critics*

Kids can design their own ratings system to keep track of different episodes of a favourite series or movies. This will help them make critical decisions about each program. They can compare their ratings with other family members or friends. This is a good way to stimulate discussion about programs.

Since so many programs are repeated, viewers can use their ratings system to help them decide if they want to watch an episode again or not.

Here are some sample rating systems:

★★★★ = very good
★★★ = ok
★★ = so-so
★ = not good

A = best
B = better
C = good
D = no good

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
awful				okay					great

A sample rating sheet:

SERIES TITLE	EPISODE # OR TITLE	DATE SCREENED	RATING AND COMMENTS
Little House on the Prairie	The 100 Mile Walk	Sept. 18	✱ ✱ ✱ exciting!

TV Rating Sheet

SERIES TITLE	EPISODE # OR TITLE	DATE SCREENED	RATING AND COMMENTS

HANDOUT 3.8 • *TV Game: TV Bingo*

Viewers can stay alert while watching TV by looking for certain things in programs. Using the list and grid below, make your own TV bingo cards. You could repeat some items on the same card (for example, living room or laugh track). Each family member can have their own card and mark the items off as they see them on TV. Play TV Bingo over a whole week or during longer viewing times such as Friday night or Saturday morning.

Sample TV Bingo items:

- car chase
- car exploding
- hospital
- police station
- living room
- laugh track
- puppet
- new car
- old car
- gun shot
- blood
- karate kick
- police officer
- dog
- telephone ring
- highway
- train
- car commercial
- cereal commercial
- toy commercial
- talking animal
- computer
- beach

[Based on "TV Tick-Tack-Toe" in *The TV Smart Book for Kids*, Action for Children's Television, EP Dutton, 1986]

HANDOUT 3.9 • *TV Game: Lyrics and Language*

Teenagers spend a lot of time watching music videos. Often, the images are not related to the lyrics, and the lyrics are hard for viewers, especially parents, to hear and understand. Ask your teenager to write out the lyrics to one of their favourite music videos to help you understand it better. Some lyrics are available on the cassette tape or CD label. Lyrics for some songs can be found on the Internet. Read the song lyrics as if it were a poem. Discuss the meaning with your teenager.

Watch the music video with the sound turned off and ask your teenager to describe the story the visuals tell. Are they related to the lyrics? Ask your teenager to try to explain what it is about the lyrics that they like so much and what they mean to them.

Many music videos have references to books and classic stories. Ask your teenager to explain their understanding of connections to other stories or events. Sometimes MuchMusic interviews musicians about this connection. *MuchMediaLit* is a program made by MuchMusic to help viewers develop a critical understanding of music videos. It can be taped off-air through *Cable in the Classroom.*

HANDOUT 3.10 • *TV Game: TV Geography*

Keep a globe, a wall map of the world, or an atlas near the TV. When places are shown on television, help children find them on the map, globe, or atlas. Keep track of how often certain places are shown over a period of time. Make lists of important places that you rarely see and try to find programs that show them.

Use this map, globe, or atlas to keep track of children's interests such as natural disasters, wars, dinosaur bone discoveries, etc. Encourage children to look for programs that are set in favourite or unusual places.

Many programs are set in no-name cities or locations. It can be fun to guess the real place they were filmed. Watch the credits at the end of the program for clues about where programs were filmed.

HANDOUT 3.11 • *Evaluation*

1. Please state one surprising thing you learned in this workshop.

2. Did you find this workshop useful?

3. Will you come to the next workshop?

4. Is there anything that could be done to improve this workshop?

Resources

Children's Television (video 110:00) "Inside the Box" series, Canadian Broad-casting Corporation, 1989
Tape looks at the elements and creative forces that make good children's television. Key issues such as role modelling and child psychology are introduced. The tape includes a useful compilation of successful children's programs such as "Sesame Street," "Mr. Dressup," "Wonderstruck" and "Degrassi High."

"Developmentally Appropriate Television: Putting Children First," (article, 8pp), Diane E. Levin and Nancy Carlsson-Paige, *Young Children*, July 1994, National Association for the Education of Young Children
Article contrasts what young children need for appropriate development with what they see on commercial television and how that affects development. It provides a useful framework for assessing television programs for young children.

Live TV [video 21:39 and activity guide], National Film Board of Canada, Pacific Centre, 1996
Fun story video that gets kids, ages 6–11, thinking about how TV and movies affect their lives. The story involves a TV that becomes a goofy action hero who gets involved with four kids' search for some lost turtles. Activity 6 in the Activity Guide is a good example of how to link kids' learning to what they see on TV.

* Indicates that resource is included in ThinkTV Resources collection at each Literacy Resource Centre. (See Where to Find Resources.)

** Indicates that resource is included only at the Nova Scotia Department of Education, Metro Region Literacy Resource Centre. (See Where to Find Resources.)

** *P.A.L.S. Parents Assist Learning and Schooling*, Human Resources Development Canada, Memramcook Institute. 1994.
Informal training program designed to encourage parents to play active roles in their children's education. For more information contact the Canadian Home and School and Parent-Teacher Federation 858 Bank St. Suite 104, Ottawa, ON K1S 3W3 (613) 234-7292 or your provincial Home and School Association.

* *Prime Time Parent* [workshop kit], Alliance for Children and Television, Health Canada. 1995
Handout 3.8 has good tips for watching with preschoolers.

Screen Smarts: A Family Guide to Media Literacy, Gloria DeGaetano and Kathleen Bander, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996
Chapter 7, Family Media Literacy Activities, provides age-specific activities for using TV to support thinking and learning.

Teleliteracy: Taking Television Seriously, David Bianculli, The Continuum Publishing Company, 1992

"Teletrance: Examining the power of one of North America's most popular appliances," Dr. Thomas Wear, *Adbusters Quarterly*, Winter 1995
Article describes how television can induce a teletrance in some viewers and shows the importance

of learning how to maintain "participatory consciousness" while watching TV and balancing viewing with other activities.

** *Television and America's Children: A Crisis of Neglect*, Edward L. Palmer, Oxford University Press, 1988

Television and the Lives of Our Children, Gloria DeGaetano, Train of Thought, Seattle, WA, 1993

* *Television Violence: A Review of the Effects on Children of Different Ages*, Wendy Josephson, National Clearinghouse on Family Violence, 1995

The Smart Parent's Guide to Kids' TV, Milton Chen, KQED Books, 1994
See Part IV, Weaving a Web of Learning for Your Child

The TV-Smart Book for Kids, Peggy Charren and Carol Hulsizer, Action for Children's Television. 1986

Use Television to Your Child's Advantage, Singer, Singer and Zukerman, Acropolis Books Ltd., 1990

Watch What Your Children Watch, Cable Television Association of Nova Scotia. 1995

Resources for Children

Adventures of Christina Valentine [audiotape], Children's Television Resource and Education Centre: San Francisco 1995
Award-winning audiotape series about a girl who looks to TV for solutions to her real-life problems. In a humorous, heroic adventure, she encounters many of the strange creatures and creation of world behind the TV screen. She begins to realize that she needs to think more critically about TV's place in her life. Skilled use of sound effects makes this tape appealing to TV watchers ages 7+.

Lights! Camera! Action! [book], Gail Gibbons, Harper & Row, 1985
A step-by-step account of making a movie. Recommended for 6- to 9-year-olds.

Ramona, Elaine Scott and Margaret Miller, Morrow Junior Books, 1988
Photo essay about the making of the TV series based on the Ramona series of children's books. Recommended for +9-year-olds.

Rock and Roll and Reading 2 [video, 50:00], Frontier College, 1990
Denise Donlan of MuchMusic explores the links between what popular musicians read and the literary references in their songs. Quick interviews and music video clips from many artists including Janet Jackson, Blue Rodeo, and Bruce Cockburn. Available for loan from Education Media Library.

Rock and Roll and Reading 3 [video, 53:00], Frontier College, 1991
More musicians discuss the link between the books they read and the songs they play. Denise Donlan of MuchMusic hosts. Musicians include MC Hammer,

Neil Young, and Mick Fleetwood. Available for loan from Education Media Library.

The Bionic Bunny Show [book], Mark Brown and Laurene Krasney Brown, Little Brown and Co. 1990
Helps 3- to 7-year-olds understand how an ordinary rabbit, Wilbur, can be transformed by television special effects into a superhero.

The Bionic Bunny Show [video 30:00], Reading Rainbow Productions, 1990
Hosted by LeVar Burton of "Star Trek: The Next Generation," this tape includes an animated version of the book, *The Bionic Bunny Show*, and a behind-the-scenes look at the making of "Star Trek." Includes a short study guide.

Internet Sites

Cable in the Classroom
http://www.cableducation.ca/english/index.html
Schedules and teaching guides for many commercial-free, copyright-cleared programs for educational use.

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC)
http://www.cbc.ca
Home page for Canada's national public broadcaster. Provides links to radio and television schedules, newsgroups, celebrity profiles, and educational sales, including excellent children's programs.

Cochran Interactive
http://www.cochran.com/cochran/default4.html
Links to "Theodore Tugboat," "StreetCents," "Cable in the Classroom," and many other useful television resources.

Discovery Channel
http://exn.ca
Schedules and teaching guides for this channel specializing in programs about science and technology, nature, adventure, and world cultures.

Education Media Library (Nova Scotia)
http://rs6000.nshpl.library.ns.ca/~nmacdona/medlib/
Catalogue of educational videos available to Nova Scotia schools. Links to many other education and media education sites worldwide.

Media Awareness Network
http://www.schoolnet.ca/MediaNet
Canada's online service dedicated to media education and media issues affecting children. Includes resources for parents, teachers and kids. Provides information about quality children's programs.

Media Launchpad
http://www.oise.on.ca/~nandersen/pad.html
A guided approach to exploring media-related Internet sites, which encourages visitors to question what they are seeing. Great links.

Movie Mom
http://pages.prodigy.com/moviemom/moviemom.html
Reviews of new and old films with advice on how to engage kids in movies.

MuchMusic
http://www.muchmusic.com/
Daily listings for Canada's music video channel. Provides background information on programs, celebrities, VJs. Links to schedules, descriptions, and teaching guides for *MuchMediaLit*, a special program for high school students to encourage critical thinking and analysis of the media and social issues as related to music, entertainment, and contemporary culture.

The Ultimate TV List
http://tvnet.com/UTVL/utvl.html
Alphabetical listing of hundreds of TV programs and schedules.

Think TV:

A Guide to
Managing TV
in the Home

Purpose of Workshop 3

Learn how to make TV viewing an active experience that can support learning, thinking, and school success.

Reading TV – The Basics

WORKSHOP 4 The Language of TV

To make meaning from what they see, television viewers need to understand the unique elements of TV's language, just as successful print readers need to understand the alphabet and the basics of grammar and structure.

TV language consists of special techniques that convey information, ideas, and emotions that go beyond the spoken and written word. For the most part, these techniques operate on the senses, not on the part of the mind that describes and analyses. Skilled critical viewers are aware of the basic elements of camera, sound, and editing techniques and how those techniques are put together to create the finished product. They understand the impact these techniques – composition, camera angle, movement, lighting effects, sound quality, and editing rhythm – have on meaning and how they can affect viewers.

Workshop 4, The Language of TV, provides participants with opportunities to develop their analytical skills and apply them to television production techniques. They will begin to engage their second set of eyes – the eyes of the informed and critical viewer.

Participants will learn to recognize and describe camera angles, camera movements, editing techniques, sound effects, and special effects, and they will explore how these techniques affect viewers and contribute to meaning. Learning this special language of television will enable participants to think clearly and critically about television and get more out of the remaining ThinkTV workshops. It will also enable them to discuss television more meaningfully with children and other family members.

WORKSHOP 5 The Language of Advertising

Reading and television, indeed all mass media, require an understanding of the people who make the stories or programs and deliver them to the audience. Just as an understanding of the circumstances of an author's life can affect the meaning of a novel, so an understanding of who creates a television message and who brings it to you can affect the meaning of a TV program.

Since television is a multi-billion dollar global industry, its commercial nature affects what is shown on television and what is left out. When viewers understand the commercial underpinnings of television and how they affect programming, they are better able to make sense of what they see and hear for themselves and their children.

Workshop 5, The Language of Advertising, explores the commercial purpose of television and how that affects programs and viewers. Participants will learn about market research and how ads are constructed to appeal to viewers.

To become critical readers of television, and be able to fully participate in the remaining ThinkTV workshops, participants will need to learn these basics of the language of television.

WORKSHOP 4

The Language of TV

Overview 4.5

Background Reading 4.6

Workshop Outline 4.8

Workshop Activities 4.11

Ideas for Adapting this Workshop 4.21

Other Activities 4.21

Handouts 4.25

Resources 4.35

Overheads

Activity 2 Illustrations

Overview

Participants will explore the idea of representation – that television does not simply present reality but that it represents someone's version of it. They will watch videos to identify and name some production techniques used to represent television producers' versions of reality. Participants will practise deconstruction, i.e., taking a program apart in the imagination to understand the elements that were used by the producers to construct meaning.

This workshop further explores the questions posed in Workshop 1:

- How does TV influence children's thinking, and learning?
- What can be done about television and its influence?

Outcomes

- Participants will explore the idea that television represents different versions of reality.
- Participants will identify different production techniques used in creating TV programs.
- Participants will practise deconstructing or taking apart TV programs.

Workshop 4 will reinforce the following:

Critical Thinking Links		Media Literacy Links	Critical Viewing Strategies
Four Main Components of Critical Thinking Process	Five Common Phases of Critical Thinking	Key Concepts about Media Literacy	
Questioning assumptions	✓ Trigger Event	Television is serious business	✓ Reality check
Detecting bias	✓ Appraisal	✓ All television messages are made up	✓ Talk about TV
Analyzing context	✓ Exploration	✓ Television uses special techniques to get ideas across and make viewers react a certain way	✓ Find questions
Seeking alternatives	Finding Alternatives	Viewers affect the meaning of television messages	✓ Watch TV
	Integration	Television affects the way we see our own lives and the rest of the world	
		✓ Television must be managed in the home	

Background Reading

Representation

As well as presenting reality, television uses special production techniques to represent someone else's version of reality. Many people behind the camera decide what to present and how. Therefore, when viewers understand (a) that television provides a representation of reality and (b) that special production techniques are used, they can be more critical viewers, better able to understand the role production techniques play in making what they see on TV.

Everything on television is a story, and two storytellers recounting the same event might tell it in completely different ways. The wise listener understands that the story is not simply a record of the event but a version of the event told in a way unique to the storyteller.

Deconstruction

Deconstruction is the process of taking something apart in the imagination to understand it better, and it is an essential skill for critical viewers to develop. To effectively deconstruct a television message, viewers must understand how it was put together in the first place.

Just like a good tailor, television producers spend a great deal of time and money making the seams of a program smooth and virtually invisible, so the viewer doesn't notice the images changing from one idea to the next. Most television producers don't want viewers distracted from their message by obvious production techniques; they want them to concentrate on the overall effect.

Therefore, a wise and critical viewer of television needs some knowledge of how television programs are put together to effectively use the ideas and information presented in a television program.

The Language of Television

Television and movies have a language of their own in which images, sound, and movement convey ideas and emotions, just like any language. The grammar of that language includes camera techniques, sound recording techniques, and editing. A list of basic techniques and definitions in each of these areas is provided in Handout 4.1, TV Production Techniques – Definitions. Viewers can learn to identify these techniques by using the VCR to look at the same scene several times.

More detailed definitions are provided in the book *Constructing Reality: Exploring Media Issues in Documentary*, listed in Resources at the end of this chapter.

Facilitator's Fact Sheet – Not by Choice

Not by Choice, [video: 14:22], National Film Board of Canada, 1989

This short video follows Karen Hansen, a single mother on welfare, as she prepares for a job interview.

The video looks like a documentary following a real person through a real event, but the film is actually a dramatic representation, not a documentary. The people on screen are actors, including the "director" who is seen in the film. The shaky, hand-held camera techniques are used intentionally to give the film the feeling of a documentary.

By stopping the video before the credits reveal that it is not a documentary, discussing the form of the video, and then revealing that it is a drama by showing the credits, you can use it with participants to trigger their thinking about how filmmakers and television producers purposely use production techniques for specific purposes. In a second viewing, analyse camera movements, angles, and editing techniques using the shot list below.

Where copyright can be cleared, this exercise can be conducted using any reality-based television program or docu-drama.

Not by Choice shot list:

1:24	medium shot, zoom in to close-up, pan as K walks out of room
2:02	cut to "NFB presents"
2:05	cut to close-up in mirror, zoom out, pan
2:30	pan to title
2:35	cut to medium shot
3:14	travelling shot to bathroom
4:43	cut to K walking into living room, camera follows action
5:43	cut to black
5:45	cut to close up of door locking, tilt, pan, hand held to follow action
6:41	cut to hand held travelling shot out door
7:22	fade from K entering bus to point of view shot looking from bus to streetscape
7:32	dissolve to close up K on bus
8:13	dissolve to close up K on bus
8:50	dissolve to medium shot K and over shoulder of director
9:26	fade to point of view, outside bus
9:29	cut back to close-up
9:45	dissolve to K
10:40	cutaway to point of view three workers outside bus
10:46	cut to K
11:07	cut to long shot K and director walking
13:06	cut to black
13:12	cut to director and camera crew running to catch up with K who is exiting building
14:05	zoom in to close-up
14:24	K walk away from camera, pan to follow to long shot.
14:34	cut to credits

This video has:
22 cuts or dissolves
4 actors
37 people listed in the production credits.
These techniques are described in Handout 4.1, TV Production Techniques – Definitions.

Workshop Outline

Purpose:

1. Explore the idea that television represents different versions of reality
2. Identify different production techniques used in creating TV programs
3. Practise deconstructing TV programs

Before you start:

- Read Tips for Working with Television, Introduction page xiv
- Review *Key Concepts about Critical Viewing and Media Literacy*, Introduction p. viii.
- Read Background Reading, Workshop 4.
- Photocopy handouts for this workshop.
- Reserve video equipment.
- Check that video equipment and tapes are working. A remote control is very useful for this workshop.
- Watch videos and try all activities yourself.

  Note: The copies of *Not by Choice* in the ThinkTV Resources collection have been time-coded, i.e., you can see the times on the screen. "Track Stars," like all videos in the *Constructing Reality* series, has on-screen video locator numbers.

You will need:

- Videos: *Not by Choice* [14:00]
- "Track Stars" [8:00] on *Constructing Reality: Exploring Media Issues in Documentary: Shaping Reality*
- VCR, monitor, and remote control
- Overhead projector or photocopies of the overheads for all participants
- Chalkboard and chalk or flip chart; markers and tape for putting up flip chart pages

Overheads:

4.1 Purposes of Workshop 4

Handouts:

4.1 TV Production Techniques/Definitions
4.2 Tips for Talking about TV Production Techniques at Home
4.3 Ad Log
4.4 Storyboard Format (optional)
4.5 Evaluation Form

Videos:

- *Not by Choice*
- "Track Stars"

Other Resources:

- Illustration A – an apple
- Illustration B – an umbrella
- Illustration C – a child's drawing of an umbrella
- apple
- umbrella

Agenda

Activity	Activity Name	Time Required	Material Required
1	Introduction	10 min	Overhead 4.1: *Purposes of Workshop 4*
2	Seeing with a Second Set of Eyes	20 min	
3	View and Discuss *Not By Choice*	40 min	Handout 4.1: *TV Production Techniques – Definitions*
	BREAK	10 min	
4	View and discuss "Track Stars"	30 min	
5	Closing and preview of next workshop	10 min	Handout 4.2: *Tips for Talking About TV Production Techniques at Home* Handout 4.3: *Ad Log*

Total time required: 2 hours

NOTE: In Activity 2 include illustrations A, B and C (apple, umbrella, child's drawing of an umbrella)

ACTIVITY 1 • *Introduction*

Purpose:
Introduce the facilitator, participants, and agenda

Time required: 10 minutes

Materials required:
Overhead 4.1 – Purpose of Workshop 4

Directions:

1. Welcome participants.
2. Briefly introduce yourself and the purpose of this workshop, using Overhead 4.1.
3. If this is the first workshop, or if there are new participants, ask each participant to introduce her/himself, telling the gender and age of their children.
4. Present the agenda and time frame for the session.
5. If you have already conducted ThinkTV workshops with this group, ask if there is anything from the previous workshop or their recent experience with TV that they would like to discuss. Adjust the agenda accordingly.

ACTIVITY 2 • *Seeing with a Second Set of Eyes*

Purpose:
Warm up the group and trigger thinking about the difference between a real object and a representation of an object.

Time required: 20 minutes

Materials required:
Illustrations A, B and C, apple and umbrella.

Directions:

1. Show illustration A. Ask, "What is this?" Most will probably say it is an apple. Show the real apple and ask them to tell you what it is. Again, most will say it is a apple.

2. Continue the exercise with illustrations B and C and the umbrella.

3. By this point, some participants may begin to start making the distinction between the photograph of an apple and the real apple, the photograph of the umbrella and the real umbrella.

4. Explain: The photograph of the apple represents the real apple and, because we know what a real apple looks like, we call it an apple when in fact is only a photograph of an apple.

5. Ask participants to keep in mind the distinction between a representation of an object and the object itself when looking at the umbrella, the photograph of an umbrella, and the child's drawing of the umbrella. Discuss the following questions:
   - Is there any difference between the photograph and the child's drawing?
   - What is the difference?
   - What techniques and tools are used to make the child's drawing and the photograph?
   - How do the different ways of representing the umbrella affect the meaning of the drawings?
   - Does the child have a different point of view about the umbrella from the photographer?
   - What about different abilities and different tools to make the drawing?
   - Is the umbrella real or is it another kind of representation?
   - What does this have to do with television?

6. Explain: The shows we see on television are someone else's representation of the world or someone else's version of a story. A news report about a crime is a story told by a reporter. The same story will be different when it is told by a different reporter or on a different TV station. The same crime reported in a newspaper will be represented very differently from the television report. It would be different again in a TV movie.

7. Discuss: What are some of the differences between the way a story is represented in a newspaper and a television newscast, between a newscast and a made-for-TV movie?

8. Explain: Everything we see in the media is a representation. Someone made it. People who make television programs use special techniques to make their representations and make them

look as close to the real thing as possible. They are very careful about how they construct these programs so viewers won't be distracted by the techniques. Producers want viewers to concentrate on the program or message, not the technique.

In this workshop, we are going to learn about the techniques television producers use to construct TV programs and how different techniques affect the meaning of programs. It is almost like developing a second set of eyes – the eyes of the critical viewer. When you know how to see with that second set of eyes you can understand television better and you can help your children understand it better.

Some people think this might ruin their enjoyment of television, to know all the tricks of the trade. But just because you know the ingredients of a cake doesn't mean you can't enjoy eating it.

ACTIVITY 3 • *View Video "Not By Choice"*

Purpose:
To illustrate the idea of representation, learn some of the camera techniques used in video production, and practise using our second set of eyes.

Time required: 40 minutes

Materials required:
Video *Not by Choice*
Handout 4.1, TV Production Techniques – Definitions

Directions:

1. Before viewing:
   Introduce the video *Not by Choice*, about a single mother on welfare. It is 14 minutes long. In this workshop we will practise using our second set of eyes, the eyes of the critical viewer.

2. Show the video. Pause at 11:07 just as Karen and the director are walking toward the camera after getting off the bus.

3. Discuss:
   - What is Karen feeling as she gets closer to the interview?
   - How can you tell?
   - What do you think is going to happen?
   - Why?

4. Resume the video. Pause at 14:28 before the credits, as Karen walks away from the camera.

5. Discuss:
   - Whose story is this?
   - Do you think it is a true story?
   - Who is telling this story?
   - What kind of a video is this? News, documentary, commercial, situation comedy, drama?
   - What makes you think that?

6. Explain:
   Most people think this is a documentary because of the camera techniques. Ask participants to describe what those techniques are and the kinds of TV shows they see them on. They may identify the following techniques:
   - Hand-held or "shaky" camera
   - Camera follows Karen around
   - Karen talks directly to the camera
   - The director talks in the background
   - At the end the camera technique looks like the operator is running
   - The electronic slate shows on the screen

   Confirm that these techniques are used in documentary, news, and reality-based TV programs.

7. Resume the video and show the credits. Read them aloud if necessary. Don't worry about getting all the names, but make sure that all the jobs are named, i.e., that the characters were all played by actors, that there was a series advisor, director, camera operator, sound recordist, etc. Make sure participants understand that this video is a dramatic representation of a story. The characters were played by actors, and it took 37 people to make the video.

8. Rewind the video to the beginning.
   Explain: We are going to view the video again, this time with no sound. Before we watch, let's name some of the camera movements, and what they look like on the screen. How do they affect the mood or feeling of a scene?

9. Give out Handout 4.1 and review the names of the various types of camera movements and edits listed there.

10. Explain: Now we are going to watch this video again but with no sound. Assign one or two people to watch for edits and to clap their hands when they notice them. Ask them to keep track of how many edits are in this video. Ask the other participants to call out any camera movement or angle that they notice.

11. View *Not by Choice* with the sound turned off. Stop and rewind the tape anytime to review a particular cut or camera technique and discuss it. There are 22 cuts or dissolves in this 14-minute video. If time allows, look at a TV commercial and compare the number of cuts. Discuss why this might be.

12. Explain: By watching the tape this way, we will develop a second set of eyes that can see how television productions are constructed. This will come in handy when you are watching television with your children. This will help us all become more informed viewers and make better sense of what we see on TV.

Where copyright has been cleared, this activity can be conducted using a videotape of a reality-based TV program or docu-drama.

ACTIVITY 4 • *View "Track Stars"*

Purpose:
To learn how sound effects are added to videos and how they affect the picture and to practise deconstruction.

Time required: 30 minutes

Materials required:
Video "Track Stars" on *Constructing Reality: Exploring Media Issues in Documentary – Shaping Reality*

Directions:

1. Before viewing: Explain that this video will show how sound effects are added to pictures in video production. The people who make the sounds are called foley artists.
2. Show "Track Stars."
3. After viewing, discuss:
   - What sounds were missing from this that are usually in action scenes? (music, dialogue)
   - What kinds of music would you expect to hear in the various scenes in this video? i.e., The thief sneaking into the building, the chase scene, the fight scene.
   - How would music have changed the video?
   - What would the characters be saying if there was dialogue?
   - Were you surprised at the things that were used to make certain sounds such as cabbages and slabs of meat?
   - Why do you think they use those instead of the real thing?
   - Did you notice any other things they used to make sounds?
   - Were the actors really getting punched and hit in those scenes?
   - Can someone demonstrate a fake punch and someone else add the sound effect?
4. Rewind the video to on-screen video locator 50, where the security guard picks up the pipe. View with no sound. Pause the video frequently to look at how differently the "action" scenes look and feel without sound. Assign a few participants to keep track of the number of cuts. Don't forget to name the camera movements.

Discussion points:

- What is different about the fight with no sound?
- How many cuts are there during the fight scenes?
- How many times do you think they had to stop and move the camera to film this fight scene?
- How would it have looked if the camera hadn't moved?
- How does the editing affect the feeling of the fight?
- How do the sound effects make the fight seem more realistic?
- Why do they add the sounds after the filming instead of recording them when they are shooting?

5. Ask if there are any further questions or comments about this video or the production techniques used. If there is time, ask participants if they have questions about how certain things are done on television. Encourage them to try to find the answers for next workshop.

ACTIVITY 5 • *Closing and Preview of Next Workshop*

Purpose: Close the workshop

Time required: 10 minutes

Materials required:

Handout 4.2	Tips for Talking about TV Production Techniques at Home
Handout 4.3	Ad Log
Handout 4.4	Storyboard Format (optional)
Handout 4.5	Evaluation Form

Directions:

1. Ask if there are any questions.
2. Ask each participant to name one production technique they are going to tell their family about. Give them Handout 4.2, Tips for Talking about TV Production Techniques at Home. Review it to make sure everyone understands it. Ask participants to bring their "I wonder" questions, or their children's, to the next workshop.
3. Give out Handout 4.5, Evaluation Form, and ask participants to complete and return it now.
4. If Workshop 5, The Language of Advertising, is scheduled next, tell when it will take place and what the topic is. Explain Handout 4.3, Ad Log, and ask participants to complete it before the next workshop.

Ideas for Adapting This Workshop

For Parents of Preschoolers

Participants of all ages enjoy this workshop because they feel they are learning the "tricks of the trade." This workshop doesn't target parents specifically, although it refers to learning about production techniques to help children understand them. The videos used are appropriate for adult learners and do not deal with children's television. However, parents of young children may want to relate their exploration of production techniques specifically to children's television; they may also need more time to learn how to make production techniques understandable for preschoolers. Where copyright can be cleared, use a children's program to identify the camera angles and movements and to count the cuts. Discuss the idea of representation as it relates to puppets, monsters, superheros, and the commercial toy products that relate to the program characters.

For Participants Who Aren't Parents

With the exception of Handout 4.2, Tips for Talking about TV Production Techniques at Home, no activities are specifically directed to parents. You could adapt this handout to remove references to children and include questions more specific to the participants. You could substitute the illustrations in Activity 2, Seeing with a Second Set of Eyes, with images less specific to children.

For Participants Who Have Limited Print Literacy Skills

Participants who have trouble with print literacy often are very adept at identifying techniques used in television. They often experience a sense of accomplishment at having their skills finally recognized as valuable and are very excited to learn the names of techniques they have noticed. If this occurs, you may want to extend the theme of this workshop, conduct more optional exercises, and encourage the participants to express themselves using images and their understanding of them.

Changing Sequence

If learning how to manage TV viewing is not a concern for your group, this could be the first workshop.

If concerns about television manipulation seem to be prominent after Workshop 1, Getting Serious About Television, you may want to conduct this workshop before moving on. This will give participants more confidence that they can learn things to pass on to their children that will give them more control over the viewing experience and how television influences them.

Other Activities

Develop a Personal Dictionary

If participants are keeping a ThinkTV Journal, this would be a good time for them to create a dictionary of television terms and definitions related to production techniques.

Surf the Techniques

Make a tape by recording off air and changing the channel every few seconds as if you were channel surfing. View this tape with participants. Ask them to identify each program. Discuss how they know. Is it the character, the set, the "look" of the program, the sound, or other features? Analyse those features further to describe specific production techniques.

Make Your Own Camera

For each participant, cut a hole 35mm x 35mm square in a letter-sized piece of paper or cardboard. Have participants explore the room looking through the hole and practising the various camera movements and angles described in Handout 4.1, TV Production Techniques – Definitions.

Use a Frame

Have each participant cut two L-shaped pieces of paper or cardboard. These are moveable frames. On still photographs or ads from magazines at least 8x10 inches in size, practise framing shots in a variety of ways. Explore the many numbers of ways a shot can be selected and the decisions that must be made regarding what to show and what to leave out. Discuss how the various ways of framing a shot can affect meaning. Make sure participants understand that hundreds of these decisions are made in the creation of every television program.

Demonstrate Camera Movements

Bring a video camcorder to the workshop and explore the camera angles and movements described in Handout 4.1, TV Production Techniques – Definitions. You can also demonstrate simple cuts by stopping the camera, changing camera angle, and starting the camera again. Many camcorders have a fade function. If time allows, encourage participants to explore the camera. Record the experiment on tape, verbally identifying each movement as you go. Play the tape back to the group so everyone can see what the various camera movements and edits look like. In some cases it you can connect the camera directly to the video monitor. The images being seen by the camera can then be seen on the monitor by the whole group as they are being demonstrated.

Invite a Professional

Invite a professional video producer to the group to demonstrate the various camera angles, movements, and editing techniques. Ask him or her to explain why certain movements or techniques are chosen and how they affect the final production. Also have participants prepare some questions in advance to ask the producer.

Visit a Video Production Studio

Arrange to take your group to a production studio where they can see camera, sound and editing equipment being used either during a live taping workshop or in a special demonstration designed for the group. Have participants prepare some questions in advance to ask the producer. Many community cable channels, community colleges, universities, even some high schools, have video production facilities where workshop groups would be welcome. In larger centres, television studios are happy to conduct guided tours. In all cases, make your requests well in advance.

Watch More of Constructing Reality: Exploring Media Issues in Documentary – Shaping Reality

Also on the *Shaping Reality* tape are six short study extracts (two to four minutes each), which can be used to study production techniques in more depth. Activities for discussing these are included on pages 100 to 111 in the *Constructing Reality* book.

The first selection on *Shaping Reality* (Video Location 00) is "Ready When You Are," a lighthearted, 13-minute film that shows the organization, people, planning, and pitfalls that go into shooting one scene for a documentary film. Activities for discussing these are included on pages 66 to 67 in the *Constructing Reality* book.

Create a Storyboard

A storyboard is an illustrated outline of a film or video. See Handout 4.4, Storyboard Format. Have participants choose a sequence from one of the films shown in this workshop and turn it into a storyboard. Participants can also create their own storyboard based on an event from their own lives or an event similar to the one portrayed in *Not By Choice*. Their storyboard could also be based on a personal recollection of a special place. Participants can use photographs or snapshots for their storyboards instead of sketches. This activity works well with two people working together.

Make Your Own TV

Using a storyboard created by a member of the group, make a group video production. This is an important and effective way for people to learn about production techniques but it is very time consuming and requires the help of someone with experience in video production to help with this activity. See Resources for a description of the *Successful Home Video Series*.

Watch the Making of...

Television programs are frequently made about the making of certain movies, such as *Jurassic Park* and *The Terminator*. The series *Movie Magic* and *Hollywood FX Masters* go behind the scenes of many productions and shows how special effects are created. Watch the TV listings and ask at video stores and libraries for these kind of productions. Have participants watch these programs and encourage them to watch them with their children. See Resources at the end of this workshop for a description of *Successful Home Video Series*.

Have a Debate

Debate the following statement: "Learning how a TV production is made ruins my ability to enjoy it."

Suspension of Disbelief

In order to get involved in a work of fiction, we must let go of our knowledge of what is real and what is make-believe. The English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge used the term "the willing suspension of disbelief" to explain how we can enjoy poetry. In other words we take our knowledge that something is not real – our disbelief – and put it on hold. We can then respond to the story as if it were real.

Have a class discussion or have participants research and write an essay on the concept of suspending their disbelief and when they do it.

Assign an Interview of a TV or Video Producer

Have participants locate and interview someone who makes videos or films, either professionally or as a hobby. Have the participants develop a list of questions in advance to ask the filmmaker about their work, why they do it, how they make decisions about what to make films or videos about, and what techniques to use. They could present this interview as a written report, an audiotape, or a videotape.

HANDOUT 4.1 • TV Production Techniques – Definitions

Use this sheet to keep track of TV production techniques when you are watching TV. Make a check mark by the ones you notice.

Camera Points of View

shot: the basic unit of television or film editing. The camera may move within a shot, but there are no cuts

long shot: shows the subject with a lot of background.

medium shot: the subject is shown from the waist up. Sometimes more than one person is in the shot.

close-up: the screen is filled with an important detail, object, or facial expression. You can see the emotion on an actor's face better in close-up.

extreme close-up: the screen is filled with an exaggerated close-up such as an eye, mouth, hand, gun, or other detail.

high angle: the camera looks down at a subject. This makes the subject look smaller and less important.

low angle: the camera looks up at the subject. This makes the subject look big and imposing.

eye level: the camera looks the subject in the eye.

Camera Movements

pan: camera moves from left to right or right to left

tilt: camera tilts up or down

zoom: looks like the camera is moving closer to or farther away from an object. "Zoom in" makes objects appear to move closer. "Zoom out" makes them appear to move away from the camera. The operator uses a special "zoom" lens to do this. The camera does not move.

static shot: The camera does not move in any way. This is usually done with the camera on a tripod.

hand-held shot: the camera is held by the camera operator rather than on a tripod.

travelling shot: taken from a moving vehicle or while the camera operator is walking.

tracking or dolly shot: the camera moves smoothly along tracks or on a wheeled platform known as a dolly.

Sound

sync sound: sound that comes from a character or action and happens at the same time as the action or speech.

lip sync: the person's lips are moving at the same time as their words are heard. You usually only notice this when words and lips are out of sync.

narration: scripted words, read by a narrator who is not seen.

sound effects (SFX, FX): sound that doesn't come from narration, lip-sync dialogue, or music. These include everything from footsteps to bird calls.

foley artist: a person who creates sounds that go with the picture. The sounds are made in a studio using props.

sound mix: the event when separate sound tracks (music, dialogue, and sound effects) are blended or mixed into one finished soundtrack.

Editing

cut: one shot changes to another.

fade: picture fades out to a blank screen or fades in from a blank screen.

dissolve: one shot fades out as another fades in. They look like they are dissolving into one another. Feels like time is passing.

HANDOUT 4.2 • Tips for Talking About TV Production Techniques at Home

Count the cuts
It's easier if the sound is turned off.

Name the camera movements
This is easier with the sound off, too.

Comment on the soundtrack
Examples:

- "Where is that voice coming from? It must be the narrator."
- "Here comes that scary music again."

Say, "I wonder"
Examples:

- "I wonder if that monster would look so scary if it wasn't a close-up shot."
- "I wonder what actor plays the voice of that cartoon character?"
- "I wonder how they made that boat explode without the actor getting hurt."
- "I wonder how they get Superman to look like he's flying."
- "I wonder what this scene would feel like without the loud music."
- Make up your own "I wonders." The kids will start to wonder too.

Watch the credits
Count the number of people it took to make the program or movie.

Find the stunt actor
After watching a video of a movie or action program, rewind it and watch the action parts. Find the places where a stunt actor could have replaced the actor. Pause at each cut for clues. You can't see a stunt actor's face. They are usually seen from the back or the side or from far away.

Watch shows about how programs are made
Some programs go behind the scenes of programs or movies and show how they are made. Some show how special effects are done, like making animals talk or actors fly. Titles often start with "The Making of..." Educational channels like Discovery, TLC, or PBS often show them. Sometimes you can rent them at the video store. Watch for: *Movie Magic, Hollywood FX Masters.*

Ask about sound and picture
After a child watches a program that you haven't seen, ask him or her to tell you about the special effects and the soundtrack. Ask teenagers about the music in television programs, ads, and movies.

HANDOUT 4.3 • *Ad Log*

Over a few days, watch two hours of programs that you or your child/ren usually watch. Pay attention to the commercials and fill in the form for each ad. Please bring this to the next workshop.

TIME	CHANNEL	PROGRAM	PRODUCT	DESCRIPTION OF AD

Ask yourself the following questions:

- How much time in this half-hour is taken up by ads and how much is program?
- Is there a difference between American channels and Canadian channels?
- How long are the ads? 15 seconds? 30 seconds? 60 seconds?
- What kind of products are advertised the most? In the children's program? In your program?
- What is the difference?
- What would you or your children do during the ads?

HANDOUT 4.4 • *Storyboard Format*

See the Other Activities section (page 4.23) for an activity that involves creating a storyboard.

A storyboard is an outline of a video or film production. It includes a rough sketch of the visuals, narration, and sound effects. Use the form below to create a storyboard for a video you would like to make.

SHOT DESCRIPTION	PICTURE	SOUND (VOICE, MUSIC, SOUND EFFECTS)

HANDOUT 4.5 • *Evaluation*

1. Please state one surprising thing you learned in this workshop.

2. Did you find this workshop useful?

3. Will you come to the next workshop?

4. Is there anything that could be done to improve this workshop?

Resources

Facilitators' Reference

Screen Smarts: A Family Guide to Media Literacy [book], Gloria DeGaetano and Kathleen Bander, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996

* *Screening Images: Ideas for Media Education* [book], Chris M. Worsnop, Wright Communication, 1994
See *Reading, Deconstruction, Motorcycles and Media Education*, p.1; *Taking a Second Look*, p.45; and *Taking a Second Look*, p.107.

"Television Literacy and Adult Edu-cation" [article], Len Masterman in *Opportunities for Adult Education*, M. Tight, editor, London: Croom Helm

Using Captioned Media in the Classroom [teacher's guide], Metropolitan Toronto School Board, 1994
Captions, like subtitles, are the printed descriptions of dialogue, narration, and other special sound effects intended for viewers with impaired hearing. They can provide a useful resource for the teacher using media or developing literacy skills. In order to use captioned media you must have a closed-caption decoder. These are available for sale or can sometimes be borrowed from organizations that serve the deaf and hard of hearing. The guide is available for $20 from Educational Services Department, The Metropolitan Toronto School Board, 45 York Mills Road, North York, ON M2P 1B6. Fax: (416)397-2640

* Indicates that resource is included in ThinkTV Resources collection at each Literacy Resource Centre. (See Where to Find Resources.)

** Indicates that resource is included only at the Nova Scotia Department of Education, Metro Region Literacy Resource Centre. (See Where to Find Resources.)

Video in Focus: A Guide to Viewing and Producing Video [book], Rick Hone and Liz Flynn, Globe/ Modern Curriculum Press, 1992

For Use with Workshop Participants

* *Constructing Reality: Exploring Media Issues in Documentary* [book and videotapes], Arlene Moscovich, National Film Board of Canada, 1993
A resource guide and 12 hours of videotapes that provide opportunities to explore some of the critical concepts regarding documentary film. The tapes include segments or clips from 28 films. The guide provides background information about the films, the making of them, and activities to explore the ideas.

** *Creating Critical Viewers* [video 80:00 and teaching guide], Dorothy Singer and Jerome Singer with Pacific Mountain Network, Centre for Media Literacy, 1994
Good video clips and lesson plans for exploring key concepts of television, including anatomy of a newscast, the creative process, the economics of television, advertising, stereotypes, and assignment editing. Designed for high school students but easily adapted for adult learners. Teaching guide has excellent activities. Available from Education Media Library for video dubbing and loan. Chapter 2, Who Creates Programs, explains the various people involved in making a television program and the process from idea to broadcast. Chapter 3, The Aesthetics of TV – Illusion and Reality, provides

detailed explanations of various camera techniques. There is a useful section on the video about the creative process of creating a TV program.

* *Prime Time Parent* [workshop kit with videos], Alliance for Children and Television and Health Canada, 1995
Handout 25 is a list of production terms with definitions.

Scanning Television [video package of four videos and teacher's guide], Neil Andersen and John Pungente, SJ, Harcourt Brace Canada, 1996
Package of 40 video clips of television programs designed for use in media education classrooms. Most clips are no longer than seven minutes each. The teacher's guide describes each clip, provides background information on the issue and suggests questions, activities and research topics. Clip #21 on Video 2 looks at Ridley Scott, a filmmaker who works in ads and feature films. Clip #22 looks at the art of TV commercials. Clip #24 on Video 3 looks behind the scenes at the complexities of shooting a baseball game for TV.

** *Successful Home Video Series* [video 30:00 each], Magic Lantern
Two programs, *Camcorder Basics* and *Basic Video Production*, provide easy-to-follow tips and techniques for making your own video productions. Available for dubbing from Education Media Library

** *Use TV to Your Child's Advantage* [book], Singer, Singer and Zuckerman, Acropolis Books Ltd. 1990
See Chapter 5, *How Television Works*, and Chapter 6, *TV Magic: Effects and Special Effects*.

For Use with Participants' Children:

Lights! Camera! Action! [book], Gail Gibbons, Harper & Row, 1985
A step-by-step account of making a movie. Recommended for 6- to 9-year-olds.

Live TV [video 21:39 and activity guide], National Film Board of Canada, Pacific Centre, 1996
Fun story video that gets kids, ages 6 to 11, thinking about how TV and movies affect their lives. The story involves a TV that becomes a goofy action hero. Activities 2 and 7 in the Activity Guide explore filmmaking techniques and simple ideas for telling your own stories by trying out media-making techniques.

Ramona [book], Elaine Scott and Margaret Miller, Morrow Junior Books, 1988
Photo essay about the making of the TV series that was based on the *Ramona* series of children's books. Recommended for +9-year-olds.

The Bionic Bunny Show [book], Mark Brown and Laurene Krasney Brown, Little Brown and Co., 1990
Helps 3- to 7-year-olds understand how an ordinary rabbit, Wilbur, can be transformed by television special effects into a superhero.

The Bionic Bunny Show [video 30:00], Reading Rainbow Productions, 1990
Hosted by LeVar Burton of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, this tape includes an animated version of the book *The Bionic Bunny Show* and a behind the scenes look at the making of *Star Trek*. Includes a short study guide. Available for loan from Education Media Library

Internet Sites:

ATV Homepage
http://www.atv.ca/
Atlantic Television Network located in Halifax

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC)
http://www.cbc.ca
Home page for Canada's national public broadcaster. Provides links to radio and television schedules, newsgroups, celebrity profiles, and educational sales, including excellent childrenis programs.

Cochran Interactive
http://www.cochran.com/home
Has a TV Resources listing which links to many sites about film and television production.

Discovery Channel
http://www.discovery.ca
Schedules of all programs and frequently lists programs such as the series *Movie Magic* about behind-the-scenes of television and movie productions.

Media Awareness Network
http://www.schoolnet.ca/MediaNet
Canada's online service dedicated to media education and media issues affecting children. Includes resources for parents, teachers, and children. Provides information about quality childrenis programs.

Media Launchpad
http://www.oise.on.ca/~nandersen/pad.html
A guided approach to exploring media-related Internet sites. Encourages visitors to question while they are browsing. Great links.

Movie Mom
http://pages.prodigy.com/moviemom/moviemom.html
A mother's reviews of new and old films with advice on how to engage kids while watching movies.

The Movie Cliche List
http://www.well.caom/user/vertigo/cliche1.html#language
Lengthy descriptions in alphabetical order of movie and television cliches ranging from airplanes and alcohol (only men are alcoholics) through kids (a kid always knows more than an adult] to wood (heroes and villains can successfully use wood, no matter how thin, as a safe shield against bullets of every calibre). These descriptions are funny and useful for pointing out conventions, stereotypes, and contradictions in television's construction of reality.

The Ultimate TV List
http://www.tvnet.com
Alphabetical listing of hundreds of TV programs, schedules, reviews, fan clubs, and links to TV related websites worldwide.

Think TV:

A Guide to
Managing TV
in the Home

Purposes of Workshop 4

To explore the idea that television represents different versions of reality

To identify different production techniques used in creating television programs

To practise deconstructing or taking apart television programs

Illustration A

Illustration B

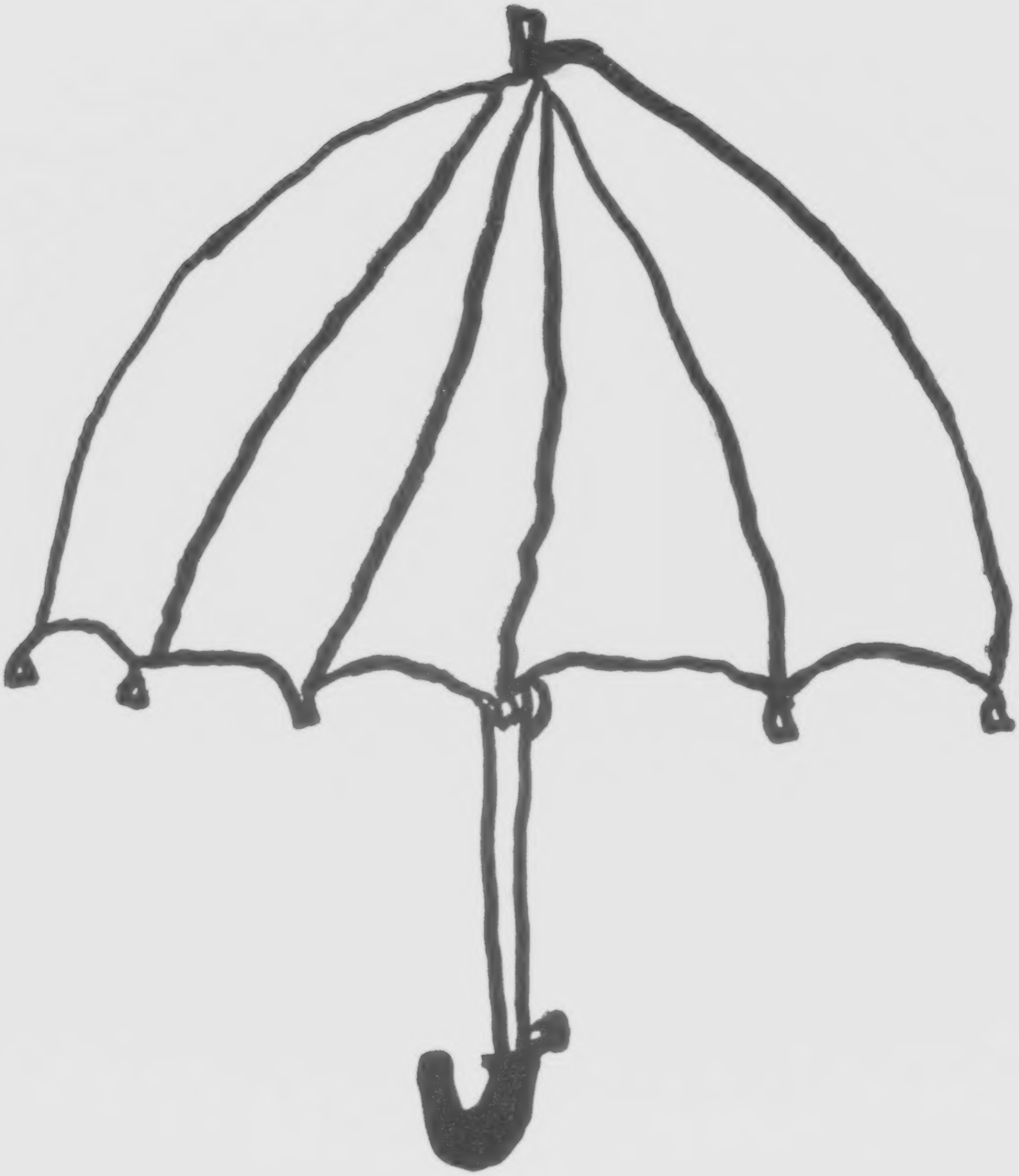

Illustration C

WORKSHOP 5

The Language of Advertising

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Overview

Television commercials provide some of the best examples of production techniques because they use the most innovative and expensive production techniques and often make the most creative use of them. Therefore, analysing the production techniques used in commercials can be very useful in helping participants understand the language of television.

Workshop 5 explores the commercial aspect of television and how it influences viewers and programs. Participants will learn the language of advertising, how television makes money from advertising, and how advertising affects programs and scheduling. They will also discuss how advertisers think about audiences. They will learn how ads are constructed carefully to appeal to certain audiences and will practise deconstructing television ads to understand their persuasive techniques and their intended impact.

When viewers understand that television is a business and that they have a role in that business, they can exercise their power as consumers and citizens to influence the kind of messages that get shown on TV. They can detect sales pitches and the strategies used to sell. Rather than feel manipulated, viewers can override the persuasive influence of tel-

Outcomes

- Participants will find out how television makes money.
- Participants will explore how television commercials are made to appeal to certain audiences.

Workshop 5 will reinforce the following:

Critical Thinking Links		Media Literacy Links	Critical Viewing Strategies
Four Main Components of Critical Thinking Process	Five Common Phases of Critical Thinking	Key Concepts about Media Literacy	
✓ Questioning Assumptions	Trigger Event	✓ Television is serious business	Reality check
✓ Detecting Bias	✓ Appraisal	✓ All television messages are made up	Talk about TV
Analyzing Context	✓ Exploration	Television uses special techniques to get ideas across and make viewers react a certain way	Find questions
Seeking Alternatives	Finding Alternatives	Viewers affect the meaning of television messages	Watch TV
	Integration	Television affects the way we see our own lives and the rest of the world	
		Television must be managed in the home	

evision advertising and make their own decisions about what they need, what to buy, and what to watch.

This workshop explores the questions posed in Workshop 1:

- Who pays for TV?
- Who decides what gets on TV?

Background Reading

This program is brought to you by...

In the early days of television, it was common to hear the words, "This program is brought to you by..." Viewers understood that a specific company was delivering a program to them. Audiences were entertained or informed, and the company enhanced its profile. For example, the term "soap opera" originated when daytime radio dramas, directed at housewives, were sponsored by soap manufacturers.

This carried over to television. Viewers identified certain products with certain programs, and sponsors were very concerned about how the program affected the audience's perception of the product. They carefully followed the content of programs and their successes or failures. Any controversy or dramatic changes in the program could result in the sponsor withdrawing support and the show being cancelled. The 1994 Hollywood movie *Quiz Show*, produced by Robert Redford, explores this aspect of early television.

In the modern multi-channel television universe, however, it is not always clear who sponsors a program, with the exception of some public television programs, which are still brought to you by specific corporations, foundations, and groups of donors.

Nevertheless, most viewers understand that television commercials are trying to sell them something. Some viewers consider ads to be annoying intrusions into what they assume to be television's real purpose, that is, providing information and entertainment. These viewers usually avoid ads and consider themselves immune to their persuasive powers. Other viewers are concerned about children being manipulated or persuaded to value things that are not affordable, not good for them, or in conflict with their family's or community's values. They suspect they are being tricked, but they can't tell exactly how and find it difficult to explain their concern to children.

Critical viewers concerned about the influence television commercials have on children can learn to analyse and discuss the values promoted on television when they understand that television programs are funded by advertisers, and that the purpose of these messages is to sell products and services. They will then also understand why television rarely portrays those on fixed incomes or other marginalized groups.

Delivering audiences to advertisers

Large companies still pay for the television programs we see but rarely sponsor specific programs. In an hour of prime-time TV, viewers can see over a dozen products advertised. Companies with products to sell now hire advertising agencies, which conduct market research to find out who will buy their products and what approaches will appeal to them. Other companies research who is watching, and when and what they are watching, using this information to give programs ratings. The advertisers then use these ratings to decide where and when to place their ads.

Television networks make their money by selling time in programs to advertisers, using ratings information to decide what kind of programs to show and when. The more people there are watching a program, the better the ratings. Since advertisers want to get their message to as many people as possible, they are willing to pay more money for more viewers. Therefore, broadcasters show programs that will attract as many viewers as possible with money to spend on the products advertised.

However, with so many television channels on the air, if a television network wants to stay in business, the first priority must be to deliver large audiences to advertisers, so they show programs that will attract the biggest audience, i.e. have the best ratings.

In this way, the need to make money from advertising affects the programs and the scheduling. The most popular programs are shown during prime time (7 to 11 pm), when the largest number of people are watching. Other factors also affect when programs are shown. During the summer, television viewing goes down, which explains why so many reruns and old programs are on then. The ratings go down, advertisers don't pay as much for the time, so television networks don't make as much money.

Audiences are big business

In 1994, advertisers spent $7.5 billion to get their sales messages to Canadian consumers, with $1.7 billion to buy time on Canadian TV channels. That works out to $62 spent on each person in Canada. Advertisers spent $38.2 billion (Can) to buy time on US channels in 1994 or $147 per person in the US. Profits earned by private, commercial broadcasters in Canada doubled between 1992 and 1993. Profits reported in 1993 were $58.5 million.

In the language of the advertising industry, audiences are called markets. Markets are studied, bought, and sold. The biggest market available to television advertisers is the audience that watches the NFL Super Bowl game every January. In 1996, advertisers paid a total of $165 million (US) to broadcast 58 commercials to that audience. The broadcaster sold each 30-second block of the television audience's time for $1.3 million. This amount did not include the cost of producing the ads.

Market research

Before any message goes on television, whether it is an ad for chewing gum or a feature-length movie, ad agencies and television networks hire companies to give a detailed profile of the kind of viewer a new program and a certain ad will attract. This profile tells the age, income, gender, marital status, and family composition. This kind of information is called "demographics." "Psychographics" measures and describes the hopes, fears, and desires of viewers. This research helps the network estimate what kind of ratings they can expect for a program and helps ad agencies design ads that will appeal to certain audiences.

Ratings

Two companies that provide ratings information are Nielsen and the Bureau of Broadcast Measurement (BBM). These companies conduct extensive surveys of television viewers to find out what programs and what channels they watch and at what time of day. This information is used to determine how much money television networks can charge for advertising time during each program they broadcast. The TV industry uses ratings to decide the dollar value of advertising time on TV.

Who pays for TV?

The quick answer to "Who pays for TV?" is that the viewer pays, but not simply by paying for cable or satellite services. Television networks show programs that will attract viewers, and when they watch, they become part of an audience. The network sells that audience's time to advertisers who use it to persuade viewers to buy products.

Television stations use the money they get from advertisers to make programs and operate their stations. A viewer watching an ad is helping a TV station earn money and keep its programs on the air. When a viewer buys a product, whether it is a drink, sneakers, or a car, part of the price goes toward the cost of advertising. So, when viewers understand how they pay for television, they can influence what gets shown by making sure advertisers understand their preferences.

Ad pressure in families

Approximately 28 percent of the messages children see on television try to persuade them to buy something. Advertisers put a lot of energy into advertising to children because Statistics Canada figures show that children from 2 to 12 spend $1.5 billion per year and influence the spending of a further $15 billion. Teens account for even more spending.

Children under 6 have trouble telling the difference between ads and programs. They do not understand that the purpose of commercials is to sell a product. They just know they've "gotta have it." The pressure children put on parents to buy things they see advertised on television can cause friction in families, including anger, resentment, and conflicting values. So it is important that parents develop ways to help their children understand the difference between their family's values and the commercial values portrayed on television. This is a major part of making sense of television.

Advertising regulations

Many laws and regulations apply to television advertising. Federal and provincial laws apply to which products can be advertised and how many minutes per hour of advertising is permitted on each channel. Products such as alcohol, drugs, cosmetic drugs, medical devices, and food are subject to legislation, and Quebec does not allow advertising to children under age 13. A list of these various laws is included in the Canadian Code of Advertising Standards.

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) and CTV each have their own guidelines for the kind of commercials they will accept. The CBC does not allow advertising during children's programs on weekdays from 10 am to 12 noon.

The Canadian Advertising Foundation (CAF) is the national organization that represents the advertising process in Canada. It administers the Canadian Code of Advertising Standards, which most members of the advertising industry and media have endorsed and agree to follow. This code regulates how products or services may be advertised and has established standards for accuracy, clarity, price claims, guarantees, testimonials, scientific claims, taste, and public decency and includes guidelines for gender portrayal.

The Canadian Association of Broadcasters and the CAF also administer the Broadcast Code for Advertising to Children. These regulations state what is acceptable and is not acceptable regarding factual representation, products, pressure tactics, scheduling, use of characters for endorsement, price information, safety, and social values.

Information on how to obtain these codes can be found in the Resources section at the end of the workshop.

Subliminal advertising

Subliminal advertising refers to advertising techniques that viewers cannot see or hear but that can supposedly influence them subconsciously. The controversy and concern about it during the 1950s was revived in the 1970s with the publication of two books: *Subliminal Seduction* and *Media Sexploitation* by Wilson Bryan Key. The theories put forth by these books have been widely refuted by many academic and advertising researchers, but the concern that advertising operates below people's threshold of consciousness still arises when people discuss television advertising.

Many educated people have been concerned about subliminal advertising in the past because advertising appeals so powerfully to emotions and often seems irrational. Participants should know, however, that the advertising industry is very sensitive to people's concerns about subliminal advertising and prohibits those kinds of techniques. Most critics of advertising now no longer consider subliminal advertising to be an issue. Without a complete review of the conflicting scientific studies over 40 years, however, it would be hard to develop an informed, critical opinion.

Most people concerned about television's influence now concentrate on developing a second set of eyes to detect and analyse the persuasive techniques we know ads use rather than trying to locate flash frames and possible hidden messages.

Workshop Outline

Purpose:

1. Find out how television makes money.
2. Explore how television commercials are made to appeal to certain audiences.

Total time required: 2 hours

Before you start:

- Read Tips for Working with Television, Introduction page xiv
- Read Background Reading for Workshop 5.
- Photocopy Handout 5.1 for this workshop.
- Reserve video equipment.
- Check video equipment and tapes.
- Select one commercial from *Production Notes: Fast Food for Thought* or the *1994 Bessies Show reel and TVB Kodak International Showcase* to use for Activity 4.
- Try all activities yourself.

You will need:

- Video: *Production Notes: Fast Food for Thought* or a selection of television advertisements
- Video: *1994 Bessies Show reel and TVB Kodak International Showcase*
- VCR, monitor, and remote control
- Overhead projector or photocopies of the overheads for all participants
- Chalkboard and chalk or flip chart; markers and tape for putting up flip chart pages

Overhead:
Purposes of Workshop 5

Handout:
Evaluation Form

Fact Sheets:

- *First Day*
- *Smooth Operator*
- *Starry Night*
- *Break Out*
- *Drummer*
- *Girls, Girls, Girls*

Agenda

Activity	Activity Name	Time Required	Material Required
1	Introduction	10 min	Overhead 5.1 – *Purposes of Workshop 5*
2	Ad Log	20 min	Handout 4.3 – *Ad Log (completed)*
3	Who do they think you are?	40 min	Fact Sheets – *First Day* *Smooth Operator* *Starry Night* *Break Out* *Drummer* *Girls, Girls, Girls*
	BREAK	10 min	
4	Think like an advertiser	30 min	
5	Closing	10 min	

ACTIVITY 1 • *Introduction*

Purpose:
Introduce the facilitator, participants, and agenda

Time required: 10 minutes

Materials required:
Overhead 5.1 – Purposes of Workshop 5

Directions:

1. Welcome participants.
2. Briefly introduce yourself and the purpose of this workshop.
3. If this is the first workshop, or if there are new participants, ask each participant to introduce her/himself, telling the gender and age of their children.
4. Present the overview, agenda, and time frame.
5. Ask if they have any comments or questions about their experience with TV since the last workshop that they would like to discuss in this workshop. Adjust the agenda accordingly.

ACTIVITY 2 • *Ad Log*

Purpose:

- Discuss observations and results from ad log activity assigned in Workshop 4
- Focus awareness on advertising messages on television
- Trigger thinking about the role advertising plays in program scheduling

Time required: 20 minutes

Materials required:
Handout 4.3 from Workshop 4, Ad Log, completed by participants.

Directions:

1. Review ad logs and discuss participants' response to the questions asked in Ad Log, the handout.

Some participants may simply find ads annoying and ignore them altogether. Many people feel this way and insist that ads have no effect on them. You may want to take some time to explore the feelings of the group toward ads and explain that even if they feel they are immune to ads, there children may be influenced by them. Advertising pays for television and a critical viewer of television understands the money behind the camera because that affects the creators behind the camera and whose messages get on the air.

Useful information for discussion:
On Canadian channels, no more than 12 minutes per hour of advertising is permitted. Some stations are limited to 8 minutes per hour. On US channels there can be as many as 17 minutes of commercials per hour.

The majority of commercials are 30 seconds in length; 15-second commercials are becoming increasingly popular. Less than 10 percent of commercials are over 30 seconds.

2. On a chalkboard or flip chart, make a list of the commercials participants recorded in their ad logs and the products that were advertised. Group the ads according to types of products advertised.

Discuss:

- How do you feel about these ads?
- Do you or your child have a favourite ad?
- What appeals to you about your favourite ad?
- Would you buy or would you like to buy these products if you had enough money?
- How do you think the television station decides where and when to show the ads?

3. Explain the concepts of market research and ratings. Ask participants which programs they think have high ratings and which have low? How can they tell?

If the ad log has not been completed before the workshop where copyright can be cleared, try this optional approach to this workshop: Make a tape of ads from various programs and time slots. Ask participants to complete the ad log based on those ads and guessing the program, time, or channel the ads came from. Discuss the questions on the ad log and in the activity directions above. Or select some ads from 1994 Bessies Show reel and TVB Kodak International Showcase *to chart and discuss. Allow more time for this version of the activity.*

ACTIVITY 3 • *Who Do They Think You Are?*

Purpose:

- Explore the way that ads are constructed and how they appeal to viewers
- Practise thinking like an advertiser

Time required: 40 minutes

Materials required:

- Video: *Production Notes: Fast Food for Thought*
- Fact Sheets: *First Day, Smooth Operator, Starry Night, Break Out, Drummer, Girls, Girls, Girls*

Directions:

1. Explain: The most carefully and expensively constructed messages on TV are commercial messages. A 30-second commercial can cost as much or more to produce than a whole half-hour episode of a TV series. The video we are going to watch illustrates the kind of planning, thought, and money that go into constructing commercial messages. Advertisers are sending a message your way. Critical viewers need to ask themselves, who do they think I am and what are they trying to sell?

   There are six commercials on this video. Each one is shown first as you would see it on TV. Then, the filmmaker has slowed the commercial down and instead of the commercial's sound track, we hear a voice reading the production notes that were sent from the advertising agency to the production company that was actually making the ad. The dollar amount on the screen is the amount it cost to produce the commercial. That does not include the amount of money it cost to buy time to show the commercial during programs.

2. View: *Production Notes: Food for Thought.* Stop the tape after each slow motion commercial and discuss it using the after-viewing discussion points on the fact sheets. You may want to show the slow-motion version of the commercial once without sound before or during the discussion.

Select one commercial from this tape to use in the next activity and do not show it at this time.

FACT SHEET 1 • *Production Notes: Fast Food for Thought*

First Day (McDonald's)

Time: 60 sec

Cost to Produce: $383,435 (US)

The following is a transcript of production notes sent from advertising agency to production company prior to filming of television commercial.

Objective:
To show kids 8 to 16 that McDonald's is the perfect place to get together after a particularly difficult day.

Story:
*It is the first day of high school for two freshmen. It is, in a sense, the first time out of the nest, a time of trial. No longer in the same classroom with the same kids day after day, these kids now have to go from place to place with strangers from 8,000 school districts. The story starts at freshman orientation. We pan a group of students looking toward the stage as the school principal gives his yearly b******* speech about challenge and life. The camera stops at our two hero kids who react with a bit of cynicism. They have heard it all before.*

Music beat begins, and we see a series of vignettes of their first day. First, the kid lost in a sea of strangers in an enormous hallway. Second, the kid as short guy at basketball tryouts. Third, being lost and getting hassled by a senior because of a hall pass. Fourth, trying to go up the down staircase. Fifth, getting used to the new water fountain. Sixth, showing up at the wrong class. As the day progresses, they begin to learn the ropes. Like figuring out how to get the locker open and how to go up the down staircase, etc. At the end of the day they excitedly go to McDonald's and commiserate and review the day.

Situation:
Pretty much as described although we would welcome others particularly in the learning the ropes area.

Locations:
- *A high school, suburban, modern feel, not dark or old.*
- *McDonald's.*

Cast:
- *Two lead boys 13 or 14, must be very good actors with a sense of humour and wryness, expressive and very real. Perhaps a bit vulnerable but underneath eternally optimistic with a sense of street smarts.*
- *Their friends: two guys, two girls the same age as heroes. Also must be up, energetic, real, also must be good actors.*
- *Members of basketball team: at least a year older and bigger.*
- *Hall monitor: 17-year-old girl, preppy and a bit of a machine, a senior with that senior superiority but all she knows is rules.*

Wardrobe: Contemporary

Look: Contemporary

Music: Contemporary

The above transcript is from the 1986 videotape *Production Notes: Fast Food for Thought* by Jason Simon, distributed by Video Data Bank, 112 South Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60603, USA. It is provided here to assist educators who are using the videotape in ThinkTV workshops.

After-viewing discussion points

- McDonald's colours are red and yellow. Count the number of times the colours red and yellow are used in each shot.
- How do you feel about the ad agencies' portrayal of the principal and his speech?
- This ad was shot in 1986. Observe and describe how African-American children are portrayed. Do you think they would be portrayed like that now? Explain.
- What time of year do you think this would be shown? What time of day? During what programs?

FACT SHEET 2 • *Production Notes: Fast Food for Thought*

Smooth Operator (Schlitz beer)

Time: 30 sec

Cost to Produce: $309,795 (US)

The following is a transcript of production notes sent from advertising agency to production company prior to filming of television commercial.

Objective:
To upgrade the image of Schlitz malt liquor and its users by positioning them as smooth operators. The product is smooth in taste and an operator in delivering the kick its users expect. The man is a smooth operator who is in control of his environment. He's smooth in his movements and way with people and an operator when it comes to strength as well as his social relationships.

Secondary Objective:
To position Schlitz malt liquor as socially acceptable to drink in social situations.

Description:
Open on hero in window-washing scaffold on high rise building. As he works he is aware that a woman inside is watching him. Cut to same man jogging in park. He passes two ladies and is aware they have stopped to take a better look at him. Cut to final scene of mixed crowd at a club. Product is being used. Pan to see hero and his lady in intimate conversation. Intercut product and pours as indicated.

Locations:
Exterior high rise with window washing scaffold, inner-city park, interior private club.

Props:
Window washer's gear, glass with bull etched on side

Cast:
- *7 principals, 14 extras*
- *Hero, age 23-25, good-looking, well-built, not muscle-bound.*

The above transcript is from the 1986 videotape *Production Notes: Fast Food for Thought* by Jason Simon, distributed by Video Data Bank, 112 South Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60603, USA. It is provided here to assist educators who are using the videotape in ThinkTV workshops.

After-viewing discussion points:
- Why do you think the ad agency chose the window washer as this hero's job?
- What other kind of work or activity could have conveyed the idea of the smooth operator?
- The ad agency says there will be seven principal actors and 14 extras. Did you notice that many people in the ad? Remember they all have to be paid.
- What do you think made this ad cost so much to make?
- What time of day would this ad be shown? On what stations? During what programs?
- Would this ad work in Canada? Explain.

FACT SHEET 3 • *Production Notes: Fast Food for Thought*

Starry Night / Comfy Shoes (Mars Bar)

Time: 30 sec each

Cost to Produce: $249,767 (US) each

The following is a transcript of production notes sent from advertising agency to production company prior to filming of television commercial.

Campaign idea:
Everyone has his [sic] *own idea of what the best things in life are. But high on anyone's list would have to be almonds, caramel and chocolate. Not entirely coincidentally, these happen to be the ingredients found in a Mars Bar. Therefore, a Mars Bar has to be counted as some of the best things in life, one of life's best rewards.*

The executions (examples) prove this logic by showing visuals of various of life's best things and juxtaposing these with beautiful food shots of the Mars ingredients. The editing of the pictures draws an equation for us between life's best things and Mars and the music does the same with a funky, Randy Newman-like voice making the case simply by listing Mars ingredients among life's other best things, as if this inclusion were the most natural in the world.

Campaign look:
We are aiming for something that might be called beautiful reality. On the one hand, we want these things that are life's best to look convincingly real, unstaged, spontaneous. The viewer should almost get the feeling that these are found moments of film, things that really happened when, as luck would have it, there just happened to be a camera rolling to film it. On the other hand, we want the images to be rich, deeply textured and beautiful.

Casting and performances:
The bulk of the casting should involve people of the same age group as the main consumers of the product – 18 to 34. This is not to rule out some exceptions on the older side of 34 but we don't want to go younger than 18 because we want to position Mars Bar as an adult reward.

In general, the people should look real in an attractive way. The performances should look natural. We are not looking for comic exaggeration in any of the scenes but rather a feeling of, "Yeah, that happened to me", "Yeah, I remember how good that felt." The more we can get viewers to identify and nod their agreement that these are life's best things, the more we can get them to accept Mars Bar as one of them.

The above transcript is from the 1986 videotape *Production Notes: Fast Food for Thought* by Jason Simon, distributed by Video Data Bank, 112 South Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60603, USA. It is provided here to assist educators who are using the videotape in ThinkTV workshops.

After-viewing discussion points:

- Name the "best things in life" shown and sung about in this commercial. Are they the things you would list as the best things in life? What would you add? Would Mars Bar or any other candy bar make the list?

- The ad agency wanted a look that they called "beautiful reality." Did these situations look real to you? Did they look spontaneous and natural? How do you think they got them to look like that?
- Describe some other things you see on TV that look like a camera just happened to be there?
- View this ad a second time and notice the camera angles. Imagine where the camera would have been positioned.

FACT SHEET 4 • *Production Notes: Fast Food for Thought*

Break Out (Pert Plus)

Time: 45 sec

Cost to Produce: $186,713

The following is a transcript of production notes sent from advertising agency to production company prior to filming of television commercial.

Objective:
Introduce new Pert Plus; convince physically active people – male and female, 13 to 34 – that Pert Plus provides great-looking hair because it is a complete shampoo and conditioner in one.

Attitude/Mood:
Energetic. This commercial portrays active, on-the-go people with a purpose. They give their all in everything they do from their work-out to their careers. Pert Plus fits their no-nonsense lifestyle and gives them great-looking hair.

Music:
Music is upbeat and furthers the intensity of the visual action.

Visual technique:
Contemporary yet realistic, strong graphic style designed to emphasise physical activity, i.e., sweat band being pulled off, hand weight being dropped, towel being snapped to the floor. Hair must be photographed to show maximum shine, bounce and movement. It is critical to achieve maximum focus on beautiful, end-result hair.

The bottle shot has two steps. It first zooms out at us from a black background. After it comes to rest, the word "Plus" zooms into position. This is intended to be a sharp, aggressive, intrusive action that calls attention to the newness of the product.

Casting:
28 to 33. Both women are active, on-the-go people whose lives have direction and meaning. They are confident in everything they do from sports to social situations to the office. They are attractive and outgoing but not glamorous. Their hair reflects contemporary styles yet is individually suited to their own style. Their hair must be in excellent condition – thick, healthy, full, natural. Their hair colours should be distinctive from one another. These women have style in the way they dress and the way they live. They can afford to dress well and choose clothes that say something about their personality.

The above transcript is from the 1986 videotape *Production Notes: Fast Food for Thought* by Jason Simon, distributed by Video Data Bank, 112 South Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60603, USA. It is provided here to assist educators who are using the videotape in ThinkTV workshops.

After-viewing discussion points:

- How does this ad show that these women are successful?
- How would this ad be different if it was meant to appeal to women older than 34?
- The ad agency wants this ad to appeal to men too? Does it? Explain?
- Discuss how images of women can be used in advertising to appeal to men. Do images of men appeal to women?

FACT SHEET 5 • *Production Notes: Fast Food for Thought*

Drummer (Pepsi)

Cost to Produce: $248,390 (US)

The following is a transcript of production notes sent from advertising agency to production company prior to filming of television commercial.

Location considerations
The location for this spot should be a lower- to middle-class Hispanic community, a community within a large urban area, a community of one- and two-storey stucco or cement, but not brick, apartment buildings, an area of small family businesses and corner mom-and-pop stores, bodegas.

We will consider using bright colours on wall, signs, etc. wherever it would seem natural to have them included. Ideally, the whole spot should be confined to a one-block area of such a neighbourhood. It should have a familiar feel for our drummer, a place where he knows his turf and everyone knows him for his unusual musical talent.

We end the spot at a big community celebration a few years later in the same block with our hero and his band providing the musical high-point of the early evening.

Casting considerations
Drummer characters: Age groups 9 to 11, 12 to 14 , 17 to 19. General physical characteristics: male, Hispanic-American, light brown to medium brown skin, dark brown to black hair, dark coloured eyes, white even teeth, slender to medium build, extremely cute and lovable-looking types. Specifically we will cast people who do not only fulfil these requirements but who are proficient drummers. In conjunction with this, we will be looking for people who can twirl a baton or who have above average eye-to-hand co-ordination, can dance or specifically bring some body rhythm, grace or poise to the character they will be playing. Gymnastics ability will be considered a plus. Also we will be looking for people who perhaps have some specific pleasant facial characteristics in common in the three age groups, i.e., dimples, large eyes, a straight cowlick, etc.

Male and female musicians: Preferably real members in a rock or popular band, should be able to play some type of instrument commonly found in this type of band. Band members should look somewhat Hispanic, no blondes.

Young mom and young father: Male and female, definitely Hispanic-looking mom and dad character types. Both should portray blue-collar types. Both should be good-looking Hispanic types that look and act comfortable in blue jeans and sweat shirts, mechanics overalls, etc. Mom and Dad should have a naturalness about them. They feel and look very much a part of their environment, a middle class, blue-collar world.

Little kid and school friends: Male and female, extremely cute, young Hispanic-looking kid. Big wide eyes, dazzling smile and dark eyes. If girl, maybe extremely or unusually long dark hair. Friends: Male and female good looking kids. One can be Anglo-looking, blond, blue eyes, freckles, etc. Other two should be Hispanic-looking preferably with some dancing ability and able to jump rope.

The above transcript is from the 1986 videotape *Production Notes: Fast Food for Thought* by Jason Simon, distributed by Video Data Bank, 112 South Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60603, USA. It is provided here to assist educators who are using the videotape in ThinkTV workshops.

After-viewing discussion points:

There are several things referred to in these production notes that we don't see in the commercial, such as school friends or jumping rope. Sometimes an ad agency may send a script or shooting suggestions but the commercial changes during the production process.

- A Pepsi can appears in many shots in this commercial. Watch for where it appears and notice how natural it looks there.
- Why do you think Pepsi would make an ad in Spanish?
- Where would this ad be shown?
- Think of some Spanish-speaking or Hispanic communities you see on TV or in movies? Does the community shown in this ad look like them? Discuss.
- Why do you think the production company specified "not brick" apartment buildings?
- Notice how the effect of time passing is created. by cutting shots of the young drummer with shots of the older drummer.
- What do you think the last line says? "Pepsi Para La Sed de la Nueva Generacion". [For the taste of the new generation.]

FACT SHEET 6 • *Production Notes: Fast Food for Thought*

Girls, Girls, Girls (McDonald's)

Time: 60 sec

Cost to Produce: $185,769 (US)

The following is a transcript of production notes sent from advertising agency to production company prior to filming of television commercial.

Objective
The objective of this spot is to convince girls in the age group from 10 to, say, 18 that McDonald's understands, empathizes, and admires them. This spot is a tribute to the female gender.

Look
Design is the key word for this spot. Everything should be taken into account to give the viewer an overall look of style, graphic design and realism to what girls are really about. Since the subject is girls, design of scenes take on the utmost importance. For instance, the bedroom scene where the girl is getting her hair done like the covergirl; let's say the walls in that room are purple, the bow in the girl's hair is pink and the sweater is, say, purple and pink, the magazine cover is slate grey and the girl behind her is dressed in a rose-coloured jacket and, say, a light grey silk skirt. The whole scene now has colours that complement one another and an intense design element. Each scene should be looked at this way, colour-wise. Every object, prop and piece of clothing should complement each other.

The photographic approach should be fresh, alive, active and inspiring, like the Dexter coke ads, like the Chicago Tribune ads, like the Levi cord night ads, like the Honda scooter ads, the 80s film look, not 70s European new wave, but 80s contemporary, heightened reality vignettes that all exist in the examples I've just described. For this commercial, the look, the music, the style is everything. Without that, we'll end up with another boring vignette spot about girls.

Casting consideration
Girls and guys should be between the ages of 13 and 16. Again, the cast should be aspirational. Kids want to appear older. We don't want rowdy street-looking kids, but we don't want Midwestern milk-fed-looking kids either.

The kids should look mature, wise and have character. We don't want redheads with freckles, all blue-eyed darlings. We want a cross-section of the American girl. Some pretty, some not-so-pretty but with character. We want to portray the world the way it is, so we have to cover the ethnic requirements.

Style
This is not your typical McDonald's commercial. We are talking a daring step for McDonald's. The kids we are speaking to are filmatically sophisticated. The McDonald's objective for 'tween advertising is to portray happy, smiling kids in their own world. The camera is like a disembodied spirit that catches these kids in the act of being themselves. McDonald's still represents God, America and apple pie. They tell you they want to move out of the neighbourhood but then you find they only wanted to go next door. I am saying this to say that there is a fine line between where we

are and how far we can go. These spots should not look too urban, too ethnic, too New Wave or too anything that does not jibe with McDonald's' image. Lighting should be dramatic but not shadowy. Locations should be beautiful but not weird. Clothing should be contemporary but not punk. Casting should be characterizations but not to the point of hoodlums. Film style should be graphic but not gritty European. In other words, we can go out of the ordinary but we can't live there. I know this may sound confusing but I find it is better to know how McDonald's works now, than argue on the set about it later. Good luck everyone.

The above transcript is from the 1986 videotape *Production Notes: Fast Food for Thought* by Jason Simon, distributed by Video Data Bank, 112 South Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60603, USA. It is provided here to assist educators who are using the videotape in ThinkTV workshops.

After-viewing discussion points

- The ad agency wanted this spot to serve as a "tribute to the female gender." What do you think about the way girls are portrayed in this spot? Does it give you the feeling that McDonald's understands, empathizes and admires girls?
- The ad agency referred to "'tweens". This is a marketing term that refers to children between the ages of 9 and 12 – in between children and teens. The ad agency says that they want to appeal to girls aged 10 to 18 but they suggest casting 13- to 16-year-olds. Why would they do this?
- The design element in each scene is as carefully planned and executed as the ad agency specified. Notice how often McDonald's colours (red and yellow) appear in the various scenes.

ACTIVITY 4 • Think Like an Advertiser

Purpose:
To integrate the idea that advertising is constructed to appeal to specific age, gender and attitudes by writing, as a group, production notes similar to the ones read in the video tape from the previous activity.

Time required: 30 minutes

Materials required:

- One commercial from video *Production Notes: Fast Food for Thought* or another commercial
- The Fact Sheet selected for this activity.

Directions:

1. Explain: This is a group project. Working in small groups, we are going to write our own production notes like the ones we just heard on the videotape. This will help you learn to think like an advertiser and understand just who they think you and your children are. A famous Canadian media critic, Marshall McLuhan, once said that ads are doing their work when you don't notice them. If you want to understand how ads persuade you and your family to buy things, you need to notice ads and understand how advertisers think when they are planning ad campaigns. This activity will help you do that.

   Participants will work in small groups to write production notes for one aspect of the commercial. These will be combined to form a complete set of production notes for the commercial you have chosen to analyse.

2. View the ad you have selected.

3. Have participants form themselves into small groups. Assign each group one of the following areas to write about. Ask them to imagine they are the advertising agency writing to the production company. Give each group the appropriate fact sheet.
   - objective (include age, gender consideration of target market)
   - story/campaign idea
   - look and visual technique (include mood, special effects)
   - locations and casting considerations (include performances)
   - music

4. View the commercial again.

5. Have each group discuss and write the notes that they would send to the production company. Encourage participants to view the ad as many times as necessary. There are many details to note in each ad.

6. Reassemble the whole group. Read the results of each group.

7. If necessary, view the ad again.

8. Discuss results. Does anyone have anything to add to the production notes? Name some programs or time slots you think this ad would be shown in? What channel would this ad be shown on? Canadian, American or both? How do you feel about this ad now? Has this exercise changed the way you will look at ads in the future? Describe.

ACTIVITY 5 • *Closing*

Purpose: Close the workshop

Time required: 10 minutes

Materials required:
Handout 5.1 – Evaluation

Directions:
1. Ask if there are any questions.
2. Explain that dealing with commercials and advertising is a big part of making sense of television.
3. Evaluation: Ask participants to complete Handout 5.1 Evaluation and return it before leaving.

Ideas for Adapting This Workshop

If the recommended resources are not available

If the video *Production Notes: Fast Food for Thought* is not available, keep in mind that the goal of this activity it to deconstruct commercials and to learn how advertisers think when preparing to get a commercial message to a specific audience. Select commercials from the *1994 Bessies Show reel and TVB Kodak International Showcase* and use the discussion approach shown in the printed transcripts of *Production Notes*. Slow the ads down by stopping and starting the tape. Where copyright can be cleared, you can use ads taped off-air or borrow other compilations of ads from educational resource centres.

If no video is available, conduct these activities by analysing magazine ads in the same way.

For participants who aren't parents

None of the activities in this workshop are specifically for parents.

For participants with limited print literacy skills

Rather than creating written production notes in Activity 4, have small groups report back verbally. You may want to tape record their report, transcribe it, and read it back while showing the ad.

Changing workshop sequence

Understanding the commercial aspects of television is a very important part of developing critical media literacy because analysing advertising on television can lead to explorations of advertising in other media and the basic underpinnings of the modern economy as a whole. Some groups may want to extend this theme over a few workshops using the other activities. In that case, you could assign Activity 4, Think Like an Advertiser, as homework. Participants could also choose their own ad, write the production notes, and present the notes at the next workshop.

Other Activities

Make your own version of Production Notes: Fast Food for Thought
If the group has access to video post-production facilities and if copyright can be cleared, make a slow motion version of a selected commercial and add a reading of the class production notes.

Analyse a cable bill
Have participants look at their monthly cable bill and ask these questions: How many channels do you pay for? How many of them do you watch? (Refer to a TV listing that lists all the channels according to which cable plan you subscribe.) Calculate how much you pay per channel. Research where the money goes: To produce programs? To provide equipment, cables? Where does the tax money go? To pay for educational TV? To keep the airwaves suitable for children?

Find the owner
Have participants find out who owns the cable company they subscribe to and how many other media outlets they own. If more than one cable company operates in your area, compare the number and kinds of channels each company provides as part of its various cable packages. Ask partici-

pants to each choose a channel carried by their cable, satellite, or broadcast service and find out who owns it, where the parent company is located, and what other companies and media outlets that company is related to. Compare the findings and combine the results to make a chart of media ownership in your community.

Create an ad map

In 1994, television advertising accounted for 23.6 per cent of the total amount of money spent on advertising in Canada, which means people are exposed to advertising in many other media. Have participants create a list of ads they see daily and map where they see them, including billboards, posters, ads on and in buses, and at grocery store check-outs, on T-shirts, ball caps, in magazines and newspapers, and on the radio. Compare the ads in various media and examine ad campaigns that involve similar themes across many media.

Watch ads and only ads

Where copyright can be cleared or as a home assignment, record all the ads in one half-hour program, but don't tape the program. View the tape and time the commercials, calculating the total amount of time commercials were shown in the half hour. Ask participants to guess if this tape was made from a Canadian or American channel, the time of day the program was made, and who the broadcaster thought was watching. Describe these viewers according to age, gender, income, family status, and lifestyle.

Watch award-winning ads

Television commercials often cost much more to produce than the programs themselves and are sometimes seen as the high art of the TV industry. Every year, the Television Bureau of Canada and similar organizations in other countries, gives awards for the best commercials in several categories. In Canada, they are called the "Bessies." The *1994 Bessies Show reel and TVB Kodak International Showcase* tape is included in the ThinkTV Resources collection. Also watch repertory cinemas and small art theatres for *The World's Best Commercials*, which comes out every year.

Spot the product placement

When a movie or TV program shows a character using a specific product, such as a brand name drink, cereal, or car, this is a form of advertising known as product placement. Advertisers pay television and movie producers to have their product shown in the scene. Encourage participants to find examples of product placement in the TV programs they watch and point them out to their children. Also ask them to note the camera angle and shot length used to show the product. Observe if the actor does anything to draw attention to the product.

Meet an advertiser

Invite someone from an advertising agency or a market research company to explain her/his job to the group. People who sell advertising for commercial radio stations or newspapers can also provide insight into how the advertising business works.

HANDOUT 5.1 • *Evaluation*

1. Please state one surprising thing you learned in this workshop.

2. Did you find this workshop useful?

3. Is there anything that could be done to improve this workshop?

Resources

Facilitators' Reference

* Indicates that resource is included in *ThinkTV* Resources collection at each Literacy Resource Centre. (See Where to Find Resources)

** Indicates that resource is included only at the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Culture, Metro Region Literacy Resource Centre. (See Where to Find Resources)

The Clam-plate Orgy [book], W.B. Key, Prentice-Hall, 1980
The author is the main proponent of the idea that subliminal messages are used in advertising.

"Free the Media" [article 5 pp], Mark Crispin Miller, *The Nation*, June 3, 1996
An important analysis and criticism of the corporate ownership of the media and how that can interfere with democratic processes. Includes a map that shows who owns the four major US TV networks and how they are tied to other media and other industries including weapons manufacturing. This article is also available at *The Nation* website: <http://www.thenation.com/> More resources by Crispin Miller and related to democracy and the media are available at: <http://www.voyagerco.com/media.demo/>

Kidscreen: About reaching children through entertainment software [monthly magazine], Brunico Communications Inc.
This excellent resource, new in 1996, clearly explains what advertisers know about children and how best to reach them and get them to buy. It is aimed at people in the entertainment and advertising industries who are trying to reach the children's market. It covers news and trends about content, scheduling, ratings, advertising, promotion, licensing, and other merchandising opportunities and provides an excellent look at how the commercial entertainment industry studies and approaches children. Brunico also publishes two other magazines about broadcasting and marketing in Canada, *Playback and Strategy*.
Brunico Communications Inc.
366 Adelaide St. West, Suite 500,
Toronto, ON M5V 1R9 [413]408-2300 fax: [416]408-0870

"Living the Sponsored Life" [article], in *Connect: A Publication of the Centre for Media Literacy/Los Angeles*, Summer 1995.

"Marketing to Kids: How the corporate world learns to profit from children" [article 6 pp], Heather-Jane Robertson, *Canadian Forum*, December 1995
A critical report about the 1995 Kid Power: Creative Kid-Targeted Marketing Strategies conference written by a renowned author, teacher, and parent who prefers to see children as citizens-in training rather than targeted markets ripe for the picking. This article provides an excellent description of the increasing commercial pressures that besiege children and why they should be understood and resisted.

* *Marketing Madness: A Survival Guide for the Consumer Society*, Michael F. Jacobson and Laurie Ann Mazur, Westview Press, 1995
A detailed description of the growing commercial influence in every aspect of daily life and what to do about it. Full of practical ideas for taming commercialism at home and in the community.

Marketing Magazine, Mclean-Hunter, 777 Bay St, Toronto, ON M5W 1A7 (416)596-5667
The main magazine for the Canadian advertising industry.

Media Sexploitation [book], W. B. Key, Prentice-Hall, 1976
The author is the main proponent of the idea that subliminal messages are used in advertising.

Out of the Garden: Toys, TV and Children's Culture in the Age of Marketing, Stephen Kline, Verso, 1993

** *Questioning the Media: A Critical Introduction* [book], edited by John Downing, Ali Mohammadi, Annabelle Sreberny-Mohammadi, Sage Publications, 1995
Includes 27 articles about many aspects of mass media by some of the foremost thinkers in communications studies. The accessible format includes chapter summaries and questions to guide discussion on a wide range of topics from media and identity, computer-mediated communications, popular music, and media coverage of AIDS. Chapter 26 explores important myths about the connection between entertainment and economics in television. Chapters 13 and 19 provide important information about the link between audiences and advertising.

Sold Separately: Children and Parents in Consumer Culture [book], Ellen Seiter, Rutgers University Press, 1995
This book explores the notion that children use Saturday cartoons to learn about their culture and develop creative imagination. It acknowledges the usual complaints about commercial children's toys and their TV tie-ins and emphasizes problems of stereotyping but still insists that these all play an important role in children's culture, especially for working-class families.

"Subliminal Delusion" [article], Timothy E. Moore, *Psychology Today*, July 1988
Describes the controversy about subliminal advertising and dismisses it effectiveness and use. The author is an associate professor at York University.

Subliminal Seduction [book], W. B. Key, Signet 1973
The author is the main proponent of the idea that subliminal messages are used in advertising.

Television and the Consumer Inside the Box series [video 30:00], Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1989
This video looks at the commercial nature of television including the positive and negative effects of television on buying habits, the importance of ratings, advertising, promotion, and consumer awareness. A study guide is included. Available from Education Media Library for loan.

For Use with Workshop Participants

1994 Bessies Show reel and TVB Kodak International Showcase [video 1:50:00], TV Bureau of Canada.
175 award-winning television commercials from Canada and several other countries. Available from Education Media Library.

The Ad and the Id: Sex, Death and Subliminal Advertising [video: 28:00], International Tele-Film Ltd., 1992
An illustrated lecture by Dr. Bernard McGraw, professor of sociology at Chapman University, about his evidence of the use of subliminal messages in magazine advertisement. Available for loan from Education Media Library.

Ad Smarts Series [multi-media curriculum kit, 3 hours], Kinetic Film Enterprises, 1993.
This kit aims to understand and counteract the

messages of alcohol and tobacco advertising. Five modules deal with media advertising and media action. Available for loan from Education Media Library.

* *Advertising and Consumerism* [video 80:37], in Media and Society series, National Film Board of Canada, 1989
Good excerpts for exploring how mass media spread the message of consumerism. The contrast between the portrayal of the birth of a child in an ad for a life insurance company and the documentary *An Unremarkable Birth* are useful for illustrating how marketing can transform ordinary events for its own purposes.

** *Broadcast Code for Advertising to Children* [booklet], Canadian Association of Broadcasters, 1993

Canadian Code of Advertising Standards [booklet], Canadian Advertising Foundation, 1991

Canadian Media Directors Digest, Canadian Media Directors' Council, Annual September supplement in *Marketing Magazine*
A handy reference tool for the Canadian media industry, which includes market research information about all media.

* *Consuming Images* [video 58:20], in The Public Mind Series, PBS, Visual Education Centre, 1989.
Bill Moyers looks at the public relations and advertising industries and their critics. Available from Education Media Library for loan and dubbing.

* *Creating Critical Viewers* [video 80:00 and teaching guide], Dorothy Singer and Jerome Singer with Pacific Mountain Network, Centre for Media Literacy, 1994
Good video clips and lesson plans for exploring key concepts of television, including: anatomy of a newscast, the creative process, the economics of television, advertising, stereotypes and assignment editing. Designed for high school students but easily adapted for adult learners. Chapter 4, Commercials, gives a good lesson in the economics of the television industry from leasing of the airwaves to the vocabulary of advertising. There are useful sections on the video about the economics of television and advertising. Teaching guide has excellent activities. Available from Education Media Library for video dubbing and loan.

Distress Signals [video 55:00], Tom Perlmutter, National Film Board of Canada, 1990.
Takes a careful look at the forces at work shaping what audiences around the world see on their TV sets. The film goes from the world's largest television show marketplace to behind the scenes at CNN and probes such questions as: Why is it cheaper for TV stations around the world to buy American TV rather than make their own dramas? How does this affect local culture and traditions? Interesting look at the business of TV in a global context.

* *Gender Portrayal Guidelines* [booklet], Canadian Advertising Foundation, 1994.
Describes in detail, the guidelines that Canadian broadcasters must follow when making and showing commercials.

* *Prime Time Parent* [workshop kit with videos], Alliance for Children and Television and Health Canada, 1995.

* *Production Notes: Food for Thought* [video 28:00], Jason Simon
A good illustration of the kind of thinking that goes into constructing ads.

"Research Probes What the Mind Senses Unaware" [article], Daniel Goleman, *New York Times*, August 14, 1990 C1.
Describes recent research on subliminal messages and concludes that they don't work.

Screen Smarts: A Family Guide to Media Literacy, Gloria DeGaetano and Kathleen Bander, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996.
Chapter 4, The Coin of the Realm: Screen Advertising, and Chapter 7, Family Media Literacy Activities, pp. 139–44 list age-specific activities for seeing through advertising.

* *TVB Television Basics*, Television Bureau of Canada
Annual compendium of facts about the television medium in Canada.

World's Best Commercials 1992–1995 [4 videos, 70:00 each], ADF Films.
Winners of the best commercials from around the world as selected at the Cannes Film Festival. Available from Education Media Library for loan.

Why You Buy: How Ads Persuade [video 33:00] School Services of Canada, 1992.
A clear explanation of six techniques advertisers use to influence buying decisions. Available from Education Media Library for loan.

Internet Sites

Adbusters
http://www.adbusters.org
Related to Adbusters: Journal of the Mental Environment. Provides articles, posters, spoof ads, and other resources for campaigns to protest the advertising industry's role in promoting environmentally irresponsible consumerism.

Advertising Age "It's All About Marketing"
http://www.AdAge.com/
The website for one of the advertising industry's most influential magazines. Articles, resources, announcements, and links to more marketing sites make this a useful resource for gathering information about the business of advertising.

American Demographics
http://www.demographics.com
Provides detailed information and articles about demographics and marketing trends in US and global markets. Articles provide excellent examples of researchers talking to advertisers about the people they are marketing products to.

Canadian Advertising Industry
http//www.adcan.com
This website is a point of entry for anyone looking for information about the Canadian advertising industry. It consists of links to trade-oriented websites of companies and individuals directly involved in the industry.

Street Cents Online
http://www.halifax.cbc.ca/streetcents.html
This web site connects to the CBC-TV show of the same name. It takes a tough look at advertising and other consumer issues for young people. It looks at kids' money, how to get it and how not to get ripped off when spending it.

Think TV:

A Guide to
Managing TV
in the Home

Purposes of Workshop 5

Find out how television makes money

Explore how TV commercials are made to appeal to different audiences

Where to Find Resources

Where to Find Resources

ThinkTV Resources collections are located the following Literacy Resource Centres. Adult educators, literacy tutors and anyone conducting ThinkTV workshops may borrow these resources.

Cape Breton Region
Adult Education Section
Nova Scotia Department of Education
c/o Marconi Campus, Nova Scotia Community College
PO Box 1042
Glace Bay Highway
Sydney, NS B1P 6J7
Ph: (902) 563-2312
Fx: (902) 563-3719

Metro Region
Adult Education Section
Nova Scotia Department of Education
Trade Mart Building
2021 Brunswick Street
Halifax, NS B3J 2S9
Ph: (902) 424-7288
Fx: (902) 424-0666

Northern Region
Adult Education Section
Nova Scotia Department of Education
60 Lorne Street, Suite 3
Truro, NS B2N 3K3
Ph: (902) 893-5988
Fx: (902) 893-6104

Southwestern Region
Adult Education Section
Nova Scotia Department of Education
c/o Lunenburg Campus, Nova Scotia Community College
75 High Street
Bridgewater, NS B4V 1V8
Ph: (902) 543-0649
Fx: (902) 543-0648

Strait Region
Adult Education Section
Nova Scotia Department of Education
c/o Strait Area Campus, Nova Scotia Community College
PO Box 1225
226 Reeves Street
Port Hawkesbury, NS B0E 2V0
Ph: (902) 625-3761
Fx: (902) 625-4264

Valley Region
Adult Education Section
Nova Scotia Department of Education
c/o Kingstec Campus, Nova Scotia Community College
236 Belcher Street
Kentville, NS B4N 3X3
Ph: (902) 679-6203
Fx: (902) 679-6235

Resources located in each Literacy Resource Centre in Nova Scotia

CRTC, You're on the Air, (booklet 11 pp), Canadian Radio-television and Telecommuncations Commission, 1989

Canadian Broadcast Standards Council, (pamphlet)

Canadian Code of Advertising Standards, (booklet) Canadian Advertising Foundation, 1991

Constructing Reality: Exploring Media Issues in Documentary, (accompanies videotapes) Arlene Moscovich, National Film Board of Canada, 1993

Creating Critical Viewers (video 80:00 and teaching guide), Dorothy Singer and Jerome Singer with Pacific Mountain Network, Centre for Media Literacy, 1994

The Effects of Media Violence on Children, [brochure 8 pp] Dr. Jane Ledingham, National Clearinghouse on Family Violence, 1994

The Effects of Media Violence on Children, (booklet 17 pp) National Clearinghouse on Family Violence, 1993

Gender and Violence in the Mass Media [report 64 pp] George Spears and Kasia Seydegart, National Clearinghouse on Family Violence, Health Canada, 1993

Marketing Madness: A Survival Guide for the Consumer Society, Michael F. Jacobson and Laurie Ann Mazur, Westview Press, 1995

Mass Media as Community Educators, (article) Stephen D. Brookfield, New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 1990

Media and Society [book and videos], National Film Board of Canada, 1989

The Media Awareness Network, (pamphlet)

Prime Time Parent, [workshop kit with videos] Alliance for Children and Television and Health Canada, 1995 Handout 16 is a list of production terms with definitions.

Respecting Children: A Canadian Approach to Helping Families Deal with Television Violence, CRTC, 1996

Screening Images: Ideas for Media Education, [book] Chris M. Worsnop, Wright Communication, 1994

So, What Good is the CRTC? (pamphlet 13 pp), Canadian Radio-television and Telecommuncations Commission

Speak It! From the Heart of Black Nova Scotia. A Users Guide, (accompanies video), Black Educators Association of Nova Scotia, 1995

TVB Television Basics, Television Bureau of Canada 95/96

Television Violence: A Review of the Effects on Children of Different Ages [report, 70 pp] Wendy Josephson, National Clearinghouse on Family Violence, 1995

Transition: What's on? You, Your Family and the Tube (journal), vol. 25, no. 1, March 1995

Violence: You Can Make a Difference [folder with 8 sheets, one video] Canadian Association of Broadcasters, 1996

Watch What Your Children Watch [pamphlet, 7 pp]
Canadian Cable Television Association, 1995

Videos

Buy Me That: A Kid's Survival Guide to TV Advertising (28:00 min)
Available from Education Media Library

Buy Me That 3: A Kid's Guide to Food Advertising (29:00 min)
Age 6 to adult. Available from Education Media Library

Constructing Reality: Exploring Media Issues in Documentary...The Candid Eye (109 min) [accompanies book] Arlene Moscovich, National Film Board of Canada, 1993
Tapes available from Education Media Library

Constructing Reality: Exploring Media Issues in Documentary...The Politics of Truth (72 min) [accompanies book] Arlene Moscovich, National Film Board of Canada, 1993
Tapes available from Education Media Library

Constructing Reality: Exploring Media Issues in Documentary...Voices of Experiences, Voices of Change, Part 1 (80 min) [accompanies book] Arlene Moscovich, National Film Board of Canada, 1993
Tapes available from Education Media Library

Constructing Reality: Exploring Media Issues in Documentary...Voices of Experiences, Voices of Change, Part 2 (114 min) [accompanies book] Arlene Moscovich, National Film Board of Canada, 1993
Tapes available from Education Media Library

Constructing Reality: Exploring Media Issues in Documentary...What is Documenting? Ways of Storytelling (111 min) [accompanies book] Arlene Moscovich, National Film Board of Canada, 1993
Tapes available from Education Media Library

Constructing Reality: Exploring Media Issues in Documentary...Shaping Reality (70 min) [accompanies book] Arlene Moscovich, National Film Board of Canada, 1993
Tapes available from Education Media Library

Creating Critical Viewers (80:00 min) (accompanies teaching guide), Dorothy Singer and Jerome Singer with Pacific Mountain Network, Centre for Media Literacy, 1994

Frontline: Does TV Kill? (60:00 min), PBS, Visual Education Center, 1995

Hymn to Freedom (Episode #2) Nova Scotia Against the Tides (60:00 min) Almeta Speaks Productions, International Tele-Film, 1994

The Impact of Television (20:00 min) Visual Education Centre, 1980.

The Killing Screens (40.00 min), George Gerbner

Media and Society – Advertising and Consumerism, National Film Board of Canada, 1989

Media and Society – Cultural Sovereignty Shaping Information, National Film Board of Canada, 1989

Media and Society – Images of Women (58 min), National Film Board of Canada, 1989

Mi'kmaq Family – Migmaoei Otjiosog (33:00 min) Catherine Anne Martin, National Film Board of Canada – Atlantic Centre, 1995

Production Notes: Food for Thought (28:00 min), Jason Simon

The Public Mind: Leading Questions (59:00 min), PBS, Visual Education Centre, 1989

The Public Mind: Consuming Images (58:20 min), PBS, Visual Education Centre, 1989
Available from Education Media Library

The Public Mind: Illusions of New (59:02 min) PBS, Visual Education Centre, 1989

Shockwaves: Television in America (26:00 min), Marlin Motion Pictures, 1984

Speak it! From the Heart of Black Nova Scotia (28:00 min), (accompanies User's Guide) Sylvia Hamilton, National Film Board of Canada, 1992

Still Killing Us Softly: Advertising Images of Women (30:00 min), Dr. Jean Kilbourne, Kinetic, 1987

TV Tango (4:00 min), no. 3 on *Rights of the Hearts*, National Film Board of Canada, 1994

You Only Have Your Wits: Thinking Critically in Everyday Situations (22:00 min) Access Alberta, 1991

Resources located at the Metro Region Resource Centre only

A is for Ox: Violence, Electronic Media and the Silencing of the Written Word, Barry Sanders, Pantheon Books, NY, 1994

The Black and White Media Book: Handbook for the Study of Racism and Television [book] John Twitchin, editor, Trentham Books: UK, 1992

Broadcast Code for Advertising to Children, (booklet) Canadian Association of Broadcasters, 1993

Children and Television: A Challenge for Education, Michael E. Manley-Casimir and Carmen Luke (editors), Praeger, 1987

Citizenship in a Media Age: Building the Common Good, A Media Literacy Workshop Kit, Center for Media and Values, Los Angeles, CA

Content Analysis: An Introduction to its Methodology, Klaus Krippendorff, SAGE Publications, 1980

Critical Thinking: A Semiotic Perspective, Marjorie Siegel and Robert F. Carey, ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, National Council of Teachers of English, Bloomington, Indiana, 1989

Critical Thinking Across the Curriculum: Building the Analytical Classroom, Victoria P. Marovana, ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, Edinfo Press, 1992

Critical Thinking and Reading: Empowering Learners to Think and Act, Allan R. Neilson, ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills and National Council of Teachers of English, 1989

Critical Thinking: Reading, Thinking and Reasoning Skills, Level D, Teachers Edition, Barnes, Burgdorf, Wenck, Steck-Vaughn Company, Austin, TX, 1993

Critical Thinking: Reading, Thinking and Reasoning Skills, Level D, Barnes, Burgdorf, Wenck, Steck-Vaughn Company, Austin, TX, 1993

Critical Thinking: Reading, Thinking and Reasoning Skills, Level F, Teachers Edition, Barnes, Burgdorf, Wenck, Steck-Vaughn Company, Austin, TX, 1993

Critical Thinking: Reading, Thinking and Reasoning Skills, Level F, Barnes, Burgdorf, Wenck, Steck-Vaughn Company, Austin, TX, 1993

Critical Viewing: Stimulant to Critical Thinking, Kevin O'Reilly and John Splaine, Critical Thinking Press

Criticizing the Media: Empirical Approaches, James B. Lemert, SAGE Publications, 1989

Developing Critical Thinkers: Challenging Adults to Explore Alternative Ways of Thinking and Acting, Stephen D. Brookfield, Jossey-Bass Inc. Publishers: San Francisco 1987

Dictionary of Media Literacy, Art Silverblatt and Ellen M. Enright Eliceiri, Greenwood Press, 1997

Endangered Minds: Why Children Don't Think and What We Can Do About It, Jane M. Healy, PH.D., Simon and Schuster, 1990

Enlightened Racism: The Cosby Show, Audiences and the Myth of the American Dream [book] Sut Jhaly and Justin Lewis, Westview, 1992

EXTRA! The Magazine of Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting [FAIR]

Fostering Critical Reflection in Adulthood: A Guide to Transformative and Enancipatory Learning, Jack Mezirow and Associates, Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, CA, 1990

Gender Portrayal Guidelines, Canadian Advertising Foundation, May 1994

Gender, Race and Class in the Media: A Text Reader [book], Gail Dines and Jean M. Humez, editors, Sage Publications, Inc. 1995

Global Questions: Exploring World Media Issues Leader's Guide and Handout Masters, Center for Media and Values, 1993

Imagine That: Developing Critical Thinking and Critical Viewing Through Children's Literature, David M. Considine, Gail E. Haley, Lyn Ellen Lacy, Teacher Ideas Press, Englewood Colorado, 1994

Jonesboro, Were the Media Fair?, The Freedom Forum, 1998

Making our Voices Heard, Mandate Review Committee, CBC, NFB, Telefilm, Communications Branch, Department of Canadian Heritage, 1996

Managing Television is a Family Affair – A Workshop for Families to Help Them Ask Critical Questions and Develop Viewing Skills That Reflect Their Own Personal Values, NTC, 1993

Mass Media and Popular Culture, Barry Duncan, Harcourt Brace Canada, 1988

Mass Media and Popular Culture (Teacher's Guide), Barry Duncan, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Canada, 1989

Media Analysis Techniques, Arthur Asa Berger, SAGE Publications, 1991

The Media and Public Issues: A Guide for Teaching Critical Mindedness, [book] Walter Werner and Kenneth Nixon, Althouse Press, University of Western Ontario, 1990

Media and You: An Elementary Media Literacy Curriculum, Donna Lloyd-Kolkin and Kathleen R. Tyner, Educational Technology Publications, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1991

Media and Values: A Quarterly Resource for Media Literacy, Spring/Summer 1991 to Winter 1988

Media Literacy: Keys to Interpreting Media Messages [book] Art Silverblatt, Praeger: Connecticut, 1995 Offers a critical approach for the study of media literacy including theoretical tools for identifying and analysing media messages and practical exercises for applying those tools to various media formats.

The Media Studies Book: A Guide for Teachers, David Lusted (editor), Routledge, 1991

Media Studies Journal: 1968 (journal), Everette E. Dennis (editor), The Freedom Forum Media Studies Centre, Columbia University, vol. 12, no 3, Fall 1998

Media Studies Journal: Children in the Media (journal), Everette E. Dennis (editor), The Freedom Forum Media Studies Centre, Columbia University, vol. 8, no 4, Fall 1994

Media Studies Journal: Covering the Courts (journal), Everette E. Dennis (editor), The Freedom Forum Media Studies Centre, Columbia University, vol. 12, no 1, Winter 1998

Media Studies Journal: Global Views on US Media (journal), Everette E. Dennis (editor), The Freedom Forum Media Studies Centre, Columbia University, vol. 9, no 4, Fall 1995

Media Studies Journal: Media and Congress (journal), Everette E. Dennis (editor), The Freedom Forum Media Studies Centre, Columbia University, vol. 10, no 1, Winter 1996

Media Studies Journal: Media and Critics (journal), Everette E. Dennis (editor), The Freedom Forum Media Studies Centre, Columbia University, vol. 9, no 2, Spring 1995

Media Studies Journal: Media and Democracy (journal), Everette E. Dennis (editor), The Freedom Forum Media Studies Centre, Columbia University, vol. 9, no 3, Summer 1995

Media Studies Journal: Media and Public Life (journal), Everette E. Dennis (editor), The Freedom Forum Media Studies Centre, Columbia University, vol. 9, no 1, Winter 95

Media Studies Journal: Race – America's Rawest Nerve (journal), Everette E. Dennis (editor), The Freedom Forum Media Studies Centre, Columbia University, vol. 8, no 3, Summer 1994

Media Studies Journal: The Race for Content (journal), Everette E. Dennis (editor), The Freedom Forum Media Studies Centre, Columbia University, vol. 8, no 1, Winter 1994

Media Studies Journal: What's Fair (journal), Everette E. Dennis (editor), The Freedom Forum Media Studies Centre, Columbia University, vol. 12, no 2, Spring/Summer 1998

Media Works, Neil Anderson, Oxford University Press, Toronto, 1989

Moral Reasoning for Journalists: Cases and Commentary, Steven R. Knowlton, Praeger, 1997

P.A.L.S. (Parents Assist Learning and Schooling), Facilitators Manual – A Guide to Facilitating Workshops, Memramcook Institute, 1994

P.A.L.S. (Parents Assist Learning and Schooling), Participants Manual – Helping Children Learn, Memramcook Institute, 1994

P.A.L.S. (Parents Assist Learning and Schooling), Participants Manual – Parenting Skills, Memramcook Institute, 1994

Playing with Power in Movies, Television and Video Games: From Muppet Babies to Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles [book] Marsha Kinder, University of California Press, 1991

Positive Action: Gender and violence in children's entertainment [3 booklets] Sandra Campbell, Viva Associates, Media Watch, 1995

Prime Time Television: Content and Control, 2nd edition, Muriel G. Cantor and Joel M. Cantor, SAGE Publications, 1992

Questioning the Media: A Critical Introduction, edited by John Downing, Ali Mohammadi, Annabelle Sreberny-Mohammadi, Sage Publications, 1995

Reporting on Risks: The Practice and Ethics of Health and Safety Communication, Jim Willis with Albert Adelowo Okunade, Praeger, 1997

Respecting Children: A Canadian Approach to Helping Families Deal with Television Violence, Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, 1996

The Smart Parent's Guide to Kids' TV, Milton Chen, KQED Books, 1994

TV – Becoming Unplugged: A Guide to Help Children Develop TV Habits, Addie Jurs, Robert Erdmann Publishing, San Marcos, CA, 1992

TVBasics, The Television Bureau of Canada, 1994-95

Teaching the Media, Len Masterman, Routledge, 1985

Television and America's Children: A Crisis of Neglect, Edward L. Palmers, Oxford University Press, 1988

Television and the Lives of our Children: A Manual for Teachers and Parents, Gloria DeGaetano, Train of Thought Publishing, Redmond, WA, 1993

Television and Society, An Investigative Approach, Charles S. Ungerleider and Ernest Krieger, Irwin Publishing, Toronto, Canada, 1985

Television and Your Children: TV and When It's Good, The Ontario Educational Communications Authority, TVOntario, 1985

The U.S. Media and Yugoslavia, 1991-1995, James J. Sadkovich, Praeger, 1998

Understanding the Media: A Practical Guide, Andrew Hart, Routledge, 1991

Use TV to Your Child's Advantage, [book] Singer, Singer and Zuckerman, Acropolis Books Ltd. 1990

Visual Messages: Integrating Imagery into Instruction, David M. Considine and Gail E. Haley, Teacher Ideas Press, Englewood, Colorado, 1992

Ways of Seeing, John Berger, British Broadcasting Corporation and Penguin Books, 1977

The Wired Bedroom, a report of the results of a media consumption survey conducted in Santa Barbara County, Office of the County Superintendent of Schools, 1989

World Families Watch Television, James Lull (editor), SAGE Publications, 1988

Audio

Becoming Critical Thinkers: Learning to Recognize Assumptions that Shape Ideas and Actions, Stephen D. Brookfield, Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers, San Francisco, CA. audio tape

Other Suggested Resources

Critical Thinking Supplement to Becoming a Master Student, (student manual), Vincent Ryan Ruggiero, Ellis.

Culture Jammers [video] Media Foundation: Vancouver, 1993

"Educating for Citizenship: New Dimensions" (article, 5 pp) Wilma S. Longstreet, in *Social Education*, January 1989

"Elementary Media Education: The Perfect Curriculum", [article, 4 pp] Rick Shepherd, *English Language Quarterly*, vol 25, nos. 2–3

"Empowerment Through Media Literacy: A Multicultural Approach" [article 15 pp] Carlos E. Cortes in *Empowerment Through Multicultural Education*, State University of New York Press, 1991

Gender Issues in the Media, Shari Graydon and Elizabeth Verrall curriculum guide [8 pp]

Kidscreen: About reaching children through entertainment software, [monthly magazine], Brunico Communications Inc.

"Living the Sponsored Life" [article] in *Connect: A Publication of the Centre for Media Literacy/Los Angeles*, Summer 1995

Media and Violence Part One: Making the Connections [magazine] Media and Values #6, Centre for Media and Values, Los Angeles

Media and Violence Part Two: Searching for Solutions, [magazine], Media and Values #63, Centre for Media and Values magazine, July 1994

"Media Literacy, Adult Learning and Critical Thinking: A Crucial Connection for Research and Practice", [article, 9 pp] Stephen D. Brookfield in *Building Tomorrow's Research Agenda for Lifelong Learning, A Symposium,* Fort Collin, Colorado, May 19, 1987 edited by Robert A. Fellenz and Gary J. Conti.

"Media Literacy: An Educational Basic for the Information Age", [article, 6 pp] Carlos E. Cortes, *Education and Urban Society,* Vol 24 No. 4, August 1992

Media Violence: What is it really doing to our children? [Report, 7 pp], Sandra Campbell, Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario, 1992

Parenting in the TV Age: A Media Literacy Workshop Kit on Children and Television, Center for Media and Values, 1991

"Pride, Prejudice and Power: The Mass Media as Societal Educator on Diversity" [article 16 pp] Carlos E. Cortes, in *Cultural Diversity in Schools,* Vol. 2

Reclaiming Childhood: Responsible Solutions to TV Violence and Our Children, [transcript] Hincks Institute [114 Maitland Street, Toronto, ON M4Y 1E1] 1993

TV-Turnoff Organizer's Kit 1996, TV Free America, 1322 18th St, NW, Washington DC 20036, (202)887-0436

Teleliteracy: Taking Television Seriously, David Bianculli, The Continuum Publishing Company, 1992

"Television Literacy for Adults: Learning to See TV" (article, 4 pp), Rhonda S. Robinson, Media and Adult Learning, *Vol 9, no. 1, Northern Illinois University, 1986*

Between the Lines: How to Detect Bias and Propaganda in the News and Everyday Life [book] Eleanor MacLean, Oxfam-Deveric, 1981

Gender Portrayal Guidelines [booklet, 12 pp] Canadian Advertising Foundation, May 1994

Moving Images: Understanding Children's Emotional Responses to Television, David Buckingham, Manchester University Press, (St. Martin's Press in Canada and USA) 1996

Screen Smarts: A Family Guide to Media Literacy, Gloria DeGaetano and Kathleen Bander, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996

The TV Book: The Kid's Guide to Talking Back [book], Shelagh Wallace, Annick Press, 1996

Teaching About Television, Len Masterman, MacMillan, 1980

Television and America's Children: A Crisis of Neglect, Edward L. Palmer, Oxford University Press, 1988

Virtual Unreality: Television, families and communities in the nineties, Alan Mirabelli, Transition March 1995, Vanier Institute of the Family

Other sources of videos and resources for media literacy education

BBM Bureau of Measurement
1500 Don Mills Road, Suite 305
Don Mills, ON M3B 3L7
Ph: (416) 445-9800
Fx: (416) 445-8644
E-mail: dhohener@bbm.ca
Website: http://www.bbm.ca
BBM is an organization that conducts surveys to find out what Canadians are watching on television. Ten times a year they select names from phone books in many areas of Canada and ask people to fill out television ratings diaries. If you would like to be asked to be part of a survey you can write to the above address and ask.

Centre for Literacy of Quebec
3040 Sherbrooke Street West, Room 4B 1-6
Montreal, PQ H3Z 1A4
Ph: (514) 931-8731 local 1415
Fx: (514) 931-5181
E-mail: literacycntr@dawsoncollege.qc.ca
Website: http://www.nald.ca/Litcent.htm
Has several resources dealing with literacy and media. Publishes *Media Focus*, a media education supplement to the quarterly, *Literacy Across the Curriculum*.

Center for Media Literacy
4727 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 403
Los Angeles, CA 90010 USA
Ph: (323) 931-4177
Fx: (323) 931-4474
Orders: (800) 226-9494
E-mail: cml@medialit.org
Website: http://www.medialit.org
Has an excellent catalogue of videos, workshop kits and regular publications about media literacy issues.

Children's Television Resource and Education Centre
340 Townsend Street, Suite 423
San Francisco, CA 94107 USA
Ph: (415) 243-9943
Excellent resources for parents and children, including the *Adventures of Christina Valentine*.

Cumberland County Family Planning
12 LaPlanche Street
PO Box 661
Amherst, NS B4H 4B8
Ph: (902) 667-7500
Fx: (902) 667-0585

Education Media Library
Learning Resources and Technology
Nova Scotia Department of Education
3770 Kempt Road
Halifax, NS B3K 4X8
Ph: (902) 424-2440
Fx: (902) 424-0633
E-mail: mediacir@rs6000.nshpl.library.ns.ca
On-line catalogue: http://www.library.ns.ca/lrt/
Video tapes and teaching guides from this library are licensed for use in Nova Scotia classrooms. Some tapes can be borrowed and some may be copied for the cost of a blank VHS videotape. Please consult the Curriculum Video Catalogue

available from school principals, or the Education Media Library.

Media Awareness Network
1500 Merivale Road, 3rd Floor
Nepean, ON K2E 6Z5
Ph: (613) 224-7721 or 1-800-896-3342
Fx: (613) 224-1958
E-mail: info@media-awareness.ca
Website: http://www.media-awareness.ca
Canadian non-profit organization and on-line service dedicated to media education and media issues affecting children. Includes resources for parents, teachers and kids. Provides information about quality children's programs and links to many other media education and resource organizations.

Media Education Foundation
26 Center Street
Northampton, MA 01060 USA
Ph: (413) 586-4170
Fx: (413) 586-8398
Mission is to provide educators and others with video resources toward the development of critically-minded, media-literate public.

Mediascope
Contact: Maisha Closson
12711 Ventura Boulevard, Suite 280
Studio City, California 91604 USA
Ph: (818) 508-2080
Fx: (818) 508-2088
E-mail: facts@mediascope.org/mediascope

National Association for the Education of Young Children (USA)
1509 16th Street NW
Washington, DC 20036 USA
E-mail: naeyc@naeyc.org
Website: http://www.naeyc.org

National Clearinghouse on Family Violence
Health Promotion and Programs Branch
Health Canada
Address Locator: 1907D1
Jeanne Mance Building
Tunney's Pasture
Ottawa, ON K1A 1B4
Ph: 1-800-267-1291
Fx: (613) 941-8930
Website: http://www.hcsc.gc.ca/hppb/familyviolence/index.html

National Film Board of Canada
PO Box 6100
Station Centre-Ville
Montreal, PQ H3C 3H5
Ph: 1-800-267-7710
Website: http://www.nfb.ca
NFB videos can be purchased by calling the above number. The complete catalogue can be seen at the web site. Many NFB productions can be borrowed from public libraries. In Nova Scotia, many are available for loan or dubbing from Education Media Library. Most NFB videos have public performance rights cleared for use in non-profit educational settings. There are local offices of the NFB in every region of Canada. In some places, NFB staff has knowledge about local media literacy resources and organizations.

New Vision Media
Contact: Craig Schram
1132 Hamilton Street, Suite 100
Vancouver, BC V6B 2S2
Ph: (604) 689-9549
Fx: (604) 683-9369
E-mail: new_vision@mindlink.bc.ca

Public Libraries
Public libraries are increasing their collection of movies and educational videos. Some titles have been cleared for educational use although most are meant for home viewing only. Check carefully for copyright restrictions or verify the availability of a public performance licence before using tapes in an educational setting. When in doubt, ask the librarian whether a Canadian public performance licence, required for classroom use, is included with the video. Libraries are also good sources of books and periodicals about television and parenting. Check the childrenis section too.

TVOntario
Box 200, Station Q
Toronto, ON M4T 2T1
Ph: 1-800-INFO-TVO
E-mail: askTVO@tvo.org

in USA:
TVOntario US Sales Office
1140 Kildaire Farm Road, Suite 308
Cary, North Carolina 27511 USA
Ph: 1-800-331-9566
E-mail:U.S.Sales@tvo.org
TVOntario has several resources for teaching media literacy and professional development for teachers.

Teachers Resource Centres
Some school boards have a resource centre which lends materials to teachers. They are usually listed in the municipal government blue pages of the telephone directory under School Board.

Theatrebooks
11 Thomas Street
Toronto, ON M5S2B7
Ph: 1-800-361-3414
E-mail: action@theatrebooks.com
Website: http://www.culturenet.ca/theatrebooks
The largest selection of books on media literacy in Canada. Offers a mail order service.

Television Bureau of Canada
890 Yonge Street, Suite 700
Toronto, ON M4W 3P4
Ph: (416) 923-8813
Fx: (416) 923-8739
E-mail: tvb@tvb.ca
Website: http://www.tvb.ca/powers3.html
Publishes annual statistics about television use in Canada in *TV Basics*. Distributes *Best of the Bessies*, a videotape of Canada's award-winning commercials.

The Internet

CBC – Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
http://www.cbc.ca
Information and schedules for all CBC TV and radio programs.

Cable in the Classroom
http://www.videon.ca/c_i_c/default.html
Schedules and teaching guides for many commercial-free, copyright-cleared educational TV programs.

Center for Critical Thinking
http://www.criticalthinking.org
Extensive information and resources for teaching critical thinking in school and university settings.

Cochran Interactive
http://www.cochran.com/default4.html
Links to *Theodore Tugboat*, *StreetCents*, *Cable in the Classroom* and many other useful television resources.

Education Media Library (Nova Scotia)
http://rs6000.nshpl.library.ns.ca/
Catalogue of educational videos available to Nova Scotia schools. Links to many other education and media education sites worldwide.

Media Awareness Network
http://www.schoolnet.ca/MediaNet
Canada's on-line service dedicated to media education and media issues affecting children. Includes resources for parents, teachers and kids. Provides information about quality children's programs and links to many other media education sites.

Media Literacy On-line Project
http://interact.uoregon.edu/MediaLit/Homepage
Media literacy resources and connections worldwide

MuchMusic
http://www.muchmusic.com/
Daily listings for Canada's music video channel. Provides background information on programs, celebrities, VJs. Links to schedules, descriptions and teaching guides for *MuchMediaLit*, a special program for high school students to encourage critical thinking and analysis of the media and social issues as related to music, entertainment and contemporary culture.

Strategies for Media Literacy
http://kqed.org/fromKQED/Cell/ml/home.html
Developed by KQED in San Francisco and Kathleen Tyner, noted American media educator. Resources and information about media literacy worldwide.

Organizations concerned with making TV better for children

Alliance for Children and Television (ACT)
205-344 Dupont Street
Toronto, ON M5R 1V9
Ph: (416) 515-0466
Fx: (416) 515-0467
A Canadian national, non-profit organization working in the interests of children to improve the quality of their TV experience. Members include many producers of childrenis programs. Sponsors an annual festival of childrenis television and awards of excellence.

Media Awareness Network
179 Rideau Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0M9
1-800-89-MEDIA
Ph: (613) 995-0740
Fx: (613) 947-2537
Website: http://www.schoolnet.ca/MediaNet
A non-profit, national clearinghouse of information about media education and media issues affecting children. Provides an extensive Internet site with resources for parents, teachers and kids, information about quality children's programs and links to many other media education sites.

Centre for Youth and Media Studies, University of Montreal
University of Montreal
Department of Communication
PO Box 6128, Station A
Montreal, PQ H3C 3J7
Andre Caron, Director
Ph: (514) 343-7739
Conducts and publishes research about youth and media.

Cultural Environment Movement
PO Box 31847
Philadelphia, PA 19104 USA
Involves a large cross-section of activists trying to challenge the commercial domination of cultural expression in all media. Founded by Dr. George Gerbner.

Media Watch
517 Wellington Street W., Suite 204
Toronto, ON M5V 1G1
Ph: (416) 408-2065
Fx: (416) 408-2069
A national Canadian volunteer feminist organization working to eliminate sexism in the media. They promote change by educating media industries, government and the pubic. They also conduct research and promote consumer advocacy. They have volunteer representatives or networks in every province. Membership is open to everyone with fees ranging from $15 for students, unemployed, and seniors to $50 for groups or institutions.

Canadian Home and School and Parent Teacher Federation
858 Bank Street, Suite 104
Ottawa, ON K1S 3W3
Ph: (613) 234-7292
Fx: (613) 234-3913

Coalition for Responsible Television
PO Box 24140, Bullfrog RPO
Guelph, Ontario N1F 6B8
Ph: (519) 821-7620
Complaint Line: 1-900-451-3664 (cost: $3 per two-minute call)
Call the complaint line to register your complaint about programs. Volunteers will pass your complaint on to the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council. The fee covers the Coalition's phone and mail costs.

Friends of Canadian Broadcasting
29 Prince Arthur
Toronto, ON M5R 1B2
Ph: (416) 968-7496
Nova Scotia contact: Teresa MacNeil
Ph: (902) 867-5271
Fx: (902) 867-2177
Advocates for strong, publicly funded, Canadian television and radio. Most recently involved in efforts to save and strengthen the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC)

Regulators

Canadian Radio and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC)
Ottawa, ON K1A 0N2
Ph: (819) 997-0313
TDD: (819) 994-0423
Fx: (819) 994-0218
Website: http://www.crtc.gc.ca
The CRTC is the government agency responsible for the licensing and monitoring of all telecommunication in Canada including television. They decide who gets a license to operate a television station and how they will operate it. The CRTC encourages broadcast industries to set guidelines for such things as violent content.

Canadian Cable Television Association (CCTA)
360 Albert Street, Suite 1010
Ottawa, ON K1R 7X7
Ph: (613) 232-2631
Fx: (613) 232-2137
Most cable companies belong to this organization. They represent the interests of the cable television industry to government and the Canadian public.

Canadian Broadcast Standards Council
PO Box 3265, Station D
Ottawa, ON K1P 6H8
Ph: (613) 233-4607
Fax: (613) 236-9241
Guided by the Canadian Association of Broadcasters' codes on broadcast ethics, sex-role portrayal, and violence in television. Responds to complaints related to those issues about programs broadcast by members of CAB, Canada's private radio and television companies. CBSC has regional representatives. Most television stations will know who is the representative for their region.

Organizations representing the television and/or advertising business

BBM Bureau of Measurement
1500 Don Mills Road, Suite 305
Don Mills, ON M3B 3L7
Ph: (416) 445-9800
Fx: (416) 445-8644
Conducts surveys to find out what Canadians are watching on TV. Will provide, on request, an information package about their surveys, reports and market research and TV statistics.

Cable Television Standards Council
220 Laurier Avenue W., Suite 560
Ottawa, ON K1P 5Z9
Ph: (613) 230-5442
Fx: (613) 230-5679
Administers standards and codes for Canadian cable television companies and handles complaints about the quality of service, cable billing, choice of programming services, and community programming.

Television Bureau of Canada
890 Yonge Street, Suite 700
Toronto, ON M4W 3P4
Ph: (416) 923-8813
Fx: (416) 923-8739
The Television Bureau includes the collective organizations of the commercial television industry. Television Bureau resources include a video library of 25,000 commercials, media research, databases and statistics about TV advertising clients and campaigns. Every year, the Television Bureau publishes *TV Basics*, an annual compendium of facts about the television medium in Canada designed to promote it as an advertising medium.

Canadian Advertising Foundation
350 Bloor Street E., Suite 402
Toronto, ON M4W 1H5
Ph: (416) 961-6311
Fx: (416) 961-7904
The national organization that represents the advertising process in Canada is responsible for administering the Canadian Code of Advertising Standards, which most members of the advertising industry and media have endorsed and agree to follow.

Canadian Association of Broadcasters
Box 627, Station B
Ottawa, ON K1P 5S2
Ph: (613) 233-4035
Fx: (613) 233-6961
This national organization of private radio and television broadcasters in Canada does not include the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) or specialty channels.

The UNESCO Declaration on Media Education

This declaration was issued unanimously by the representatives of 19 nations at UNESCO's 1982 International Symposium on Media Education at Grunwald, Federal Republic of Germany. It is reproduced here for educators to use when explaining the need to teach about the media.

We live in a world where media are omnipresent: an increasing number of people spend a great deal of time watching television, reading newspaper and magazines, playing records and listening to the radio. In some countries, for example, children already spend more time watching television than they do attending school.

Rather than condemn or endorse the undoubted power of the media, we need to accept their significant impact and penetration throughout the world as an established fact, and also appreciate their importance as an element of culture in today's world. The role of communication and media in the process of development should not be unestimated, nor the function of media as instruments for the citizen's active participation in society. Political and educational systems need to recognise their obligations to promote in their citizens a critical understanding of the phenomena of communication.

Regrettably most informal and non-formal educational systems do little to promote media education or education for communication. Too often the gap between the educational experience they offer and the real world in which people live is disturbingly wide. But if the arguments for media education as a preparation for responsible citizenship are formidable now, in the very near future with the development of communication technology such as satellite broadcasting, two-way cable systems, television data systems, video cassette and disc materials, they ought to be irresistible, given the increasing degree of choice in media consumption resulting from these developments.

Responsible educators will not ignore these developments, but will work alongside their students in understanding them and making sense of such consequences as the rapid development of two-way communication and the ensuing individualisation and access to information.

This is not to underestimate the impact on cultural identify of the flow of information and the ideas between cultures by the mass media.

The school and the family share the responsibility of preparing the young person for living in a world of powerful images, words and sounds. Children and adults need to be literate in all three of these symbolic systems, and this will require some reassessment of educational priorities. Such a reassessment might well result in an integrated approach to the teaching of language and communication.

Media education will be most effective when parents, teachers, media personnel and decision-makers all acknowledge they have a role to play in developing greater critical awareness among listeners, viewers and readers. The greater integration of educational and communications systems would undoubtedly be an important step towards more effective education.

We therefore call upon the competent authorities to:

1. initiate and support comprehensive media education programs – from pre-school to university level, and in adult education – the purpose of which is to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes which will encourage the growth of critical awareness and, consequently, of greater competence among the users of electronic and print media. Ideally, such programs should include the analysis of media products, the use of media as means of creative expression, and effective use of and participation in available media channels;

2. develop training courses for teachers and intermediaries both to increase their knowledge and understanding of the media and train them in appropriate teaching methods, which would take into account the already considerable but fragmented acquaintance with media already possessed by many students;

3. stimulate research and development activities for the benefit of media education, from such domains as psychology, sociology, and communication science;

4. support and strengthen the actions undertaken or envisaged by UNESCO and which aim at encouraging international cooperation in media education.

Grunwald, Federal Republic of Germany
22 January 1982